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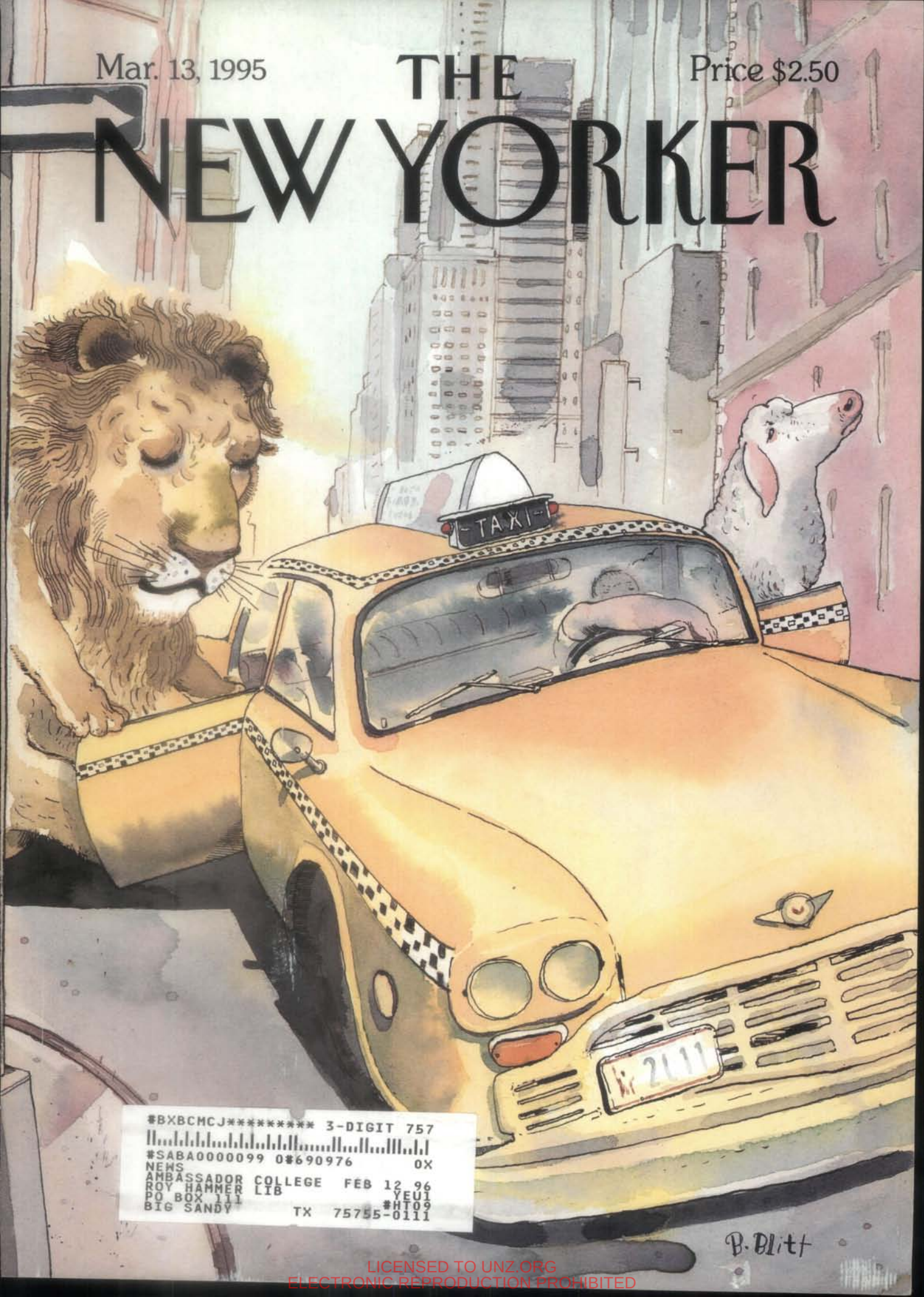

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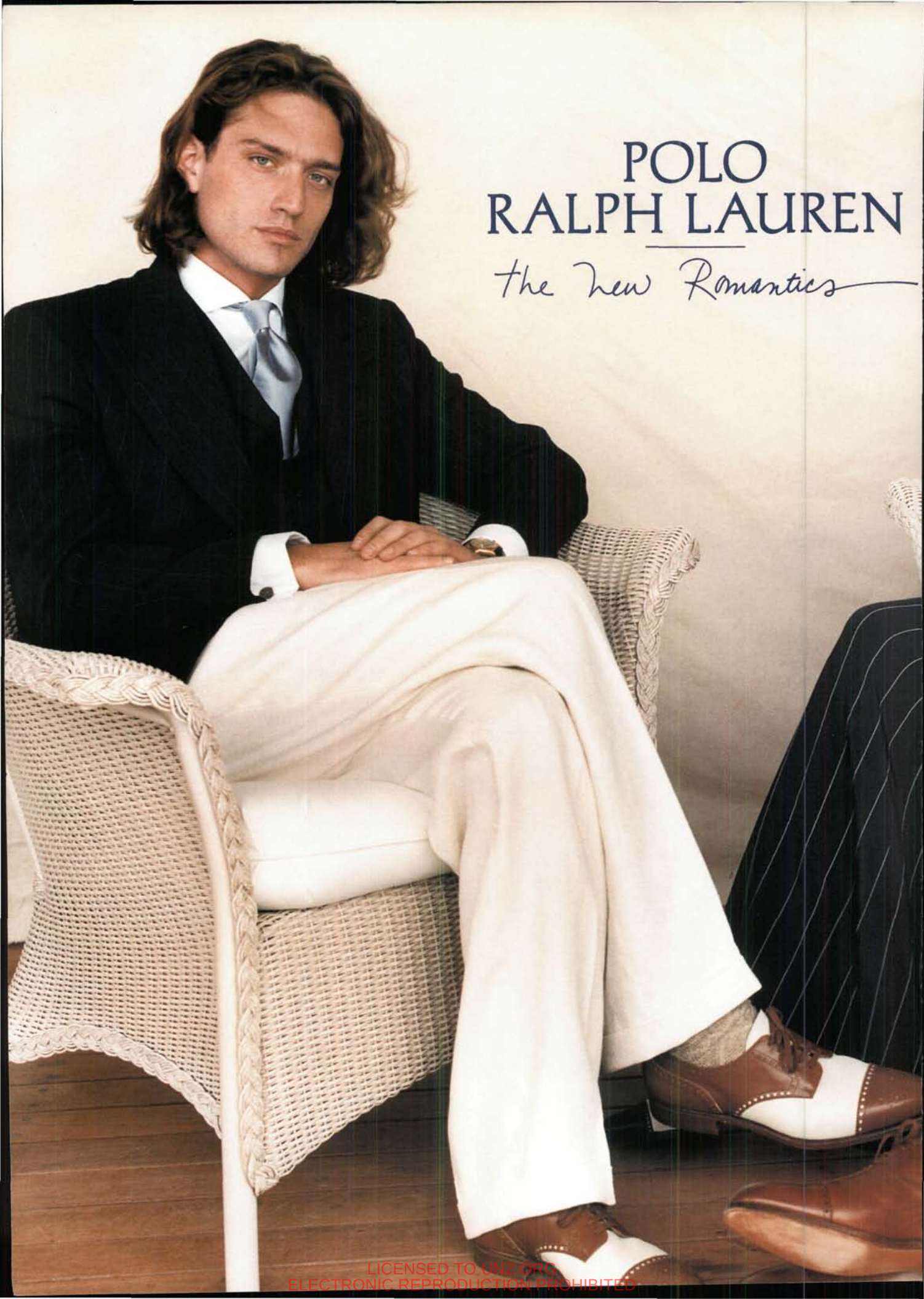

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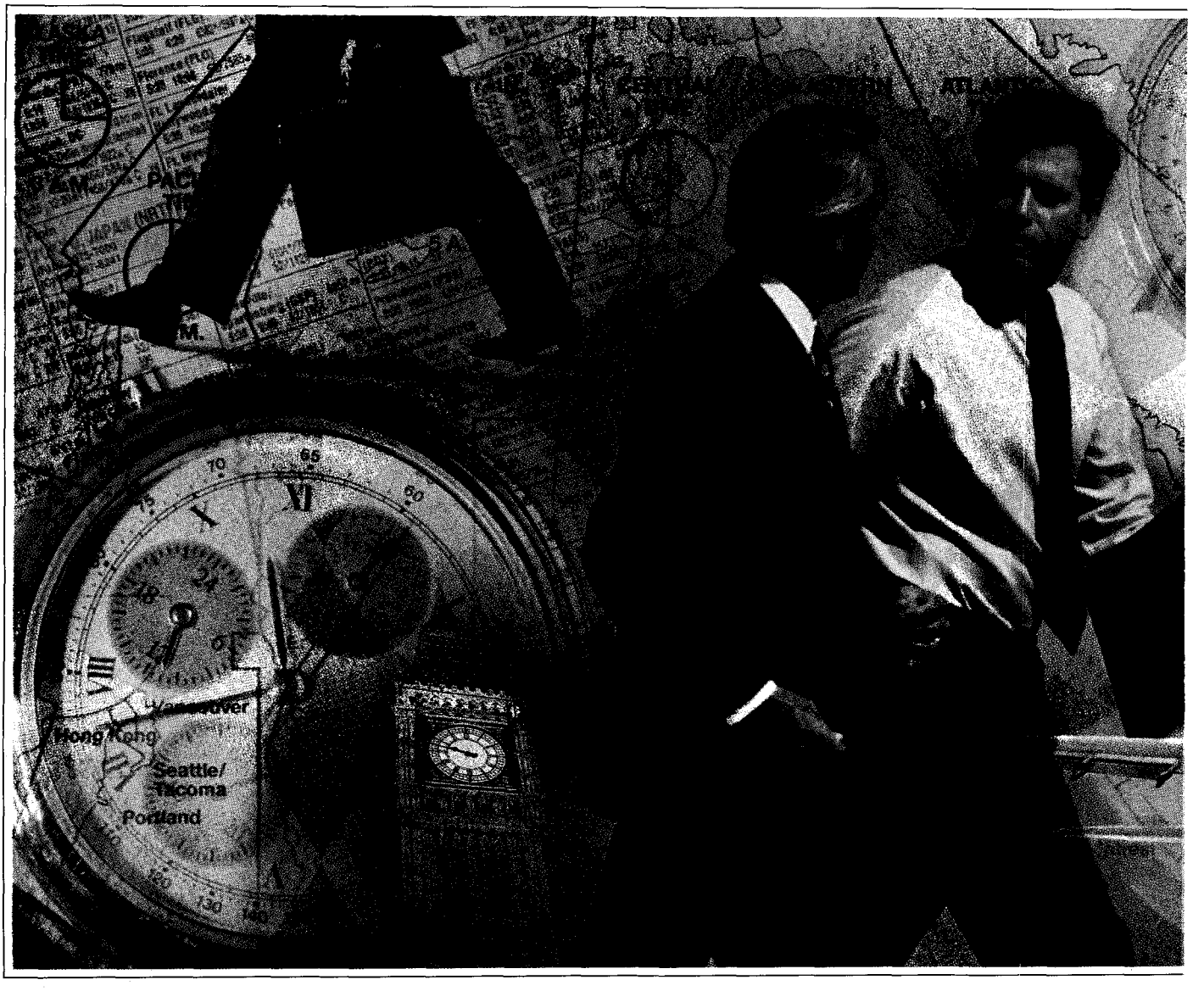

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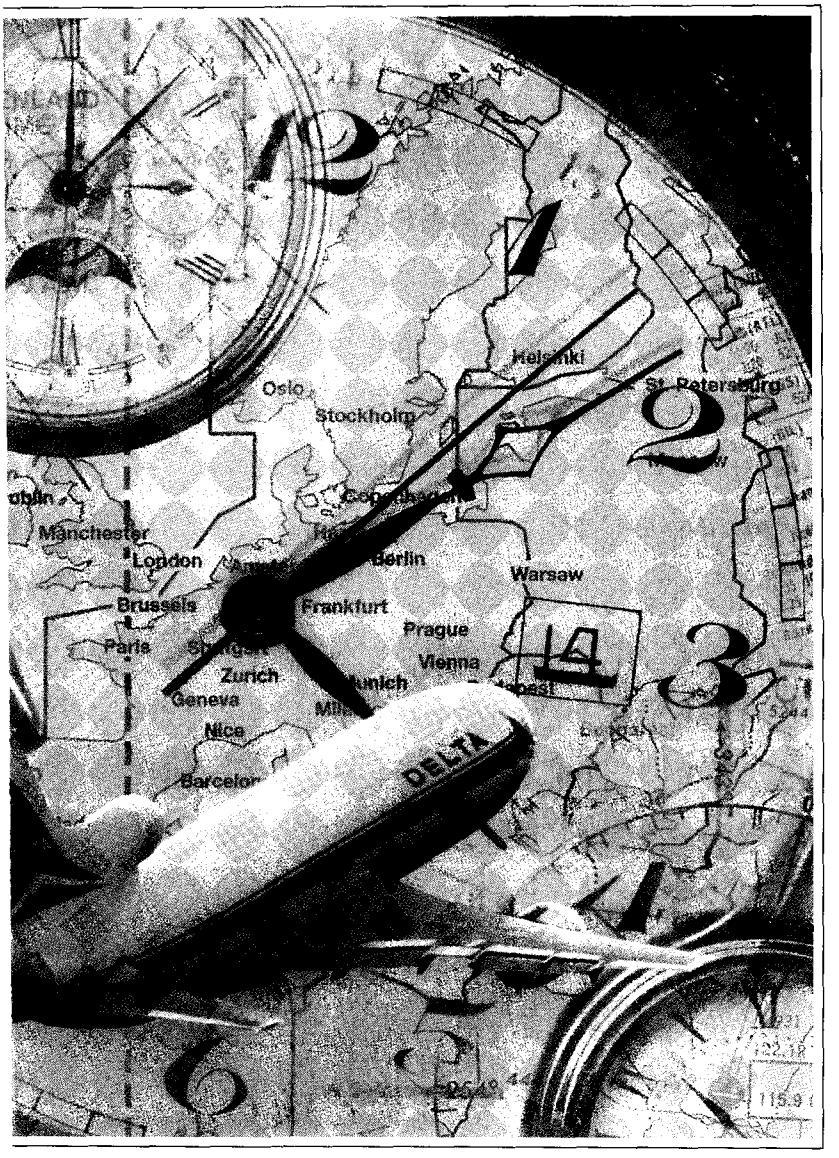

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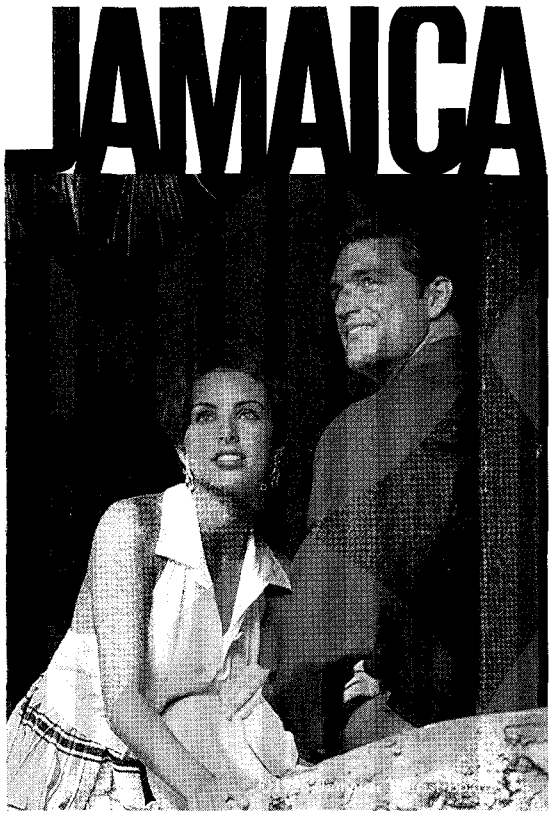

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TWO DREAMS

One gets Oscar's nod, the other gets Gumped.

THE Academy Awards are still a couple of weeks off, but the real news about this year's version of the tacky, reassuring old festival is already only too familiar—the thirteen nominations (including Best Picture, Best Actor, and Best Director) bestowed upon the box-office smash "Forrest Gump," and the Motion Picture Academy's simultaneous dissing of the acclaimed inner-city basketball documentary "Hoop Dreams," which received a single, entry-level nomination (for film editing). A Best Picture nomination was unlikely for "Hoop Dreams," given its length—it runs nearly three hours—and its genre, but to see it passed over altogether in the Best Documentary category is more than strange: it's weird. The relevant Academy committee has stood fast in the face of a considerable outcry, claiming a bit huffily that it looked at sixty-four documentaries this year (who else has done *that*?) and found five that it admired more than "Hoop Dreams." This feels unanswerable—the same way it feels unanswerable when a friend tells you that you haven't really given Rush Limbaugh a chance till you've listened to his program every day for a whole month. And "Hoop Dreams" isn't the first nonfiction picture to get Oscar's cold shoulder: Claude Lanzmann's "Shoah" (1985) and Errol Morris's "The Thin Blue Line" (1988) were similarly stiffed. Still, the doubt remains.

"Hoop Dreams," which was made by Steve James, Peter Gilbert, and Frederick Marx, closely tracks the fortunes of two promising young basketball players in the Chicago inner city, picking them up when they are fourteen years old and have begun to draw the attention of playground scouts recruiting for local high-school teams, and then following them through four years of practices and games and tournaments as the boys become stars—celebrated in the neighborhood not just for their suave turnaround jumpers but for the possibility that down the line they may win scholarships that will provide entry into one of the great basketball universities, and after that, just over the horizon, even into the N.B.A. itself. This is the premier American sports dream now, catching up hundreds of thousands of inner-city black youths each year, and to see it played out, in all its in-

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exorable ironies, in this movie—neither young man attains the college heights he aims for, after injuries and bad schools and low grades have done their various damages—is a considerable experience and a painful one. The almost visible enemy here is the large presence of American sports dollars hanging out around these poor streets and unsophisticated lives—the free gear, the summer job, the free orthopedic operations, the smiling college recruiters, and the horrific meat market of the Nike summer camp for prime national hoop prospects. The big bucks walk away at the end, leaving behind the deathlike chill that befalls a failed prospect when fame and promise stop for good.

If we know some of this already, "Hoop Dreams" has more in store for its audiences in its intimate and effortless participation in the daily life of some families inside the American black ghetto; this is the documentary we have sensed in the middle of movies like Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing" but have never seen put together so dispassionately and convincingly as it is here. Not much seems left out. A father laughs and horses around while he shoots some baskets, and then, with his son watching, cops drugs in a corner of the same playground. The father falls out of the story, into drugs, then into jail, and unexpectedly comes back, born again. A player's sister has a baby, and so does another player's girlfriend. A school friend moves in, to get away from his own violent family. Jobs are scarce, and aren't much in any case: Burger King is paying three-seventy-five an hour. A family's money runs out, and the lights and the heat are turned off. An older brother, once a great city hoops prospect himself, grows fat and bitter. There are birthdays and a wedding, with noisy parties; and one player's mother unexpectedly graduates from a modest nurse's-aide program. Both mothers share the gym dramas, yelling and jumping up and down in the stands, and they're also on hand to comfort a weeping son after the big game has gone the wrong way. Tough stuff—and not about dreams, in the end.

"Forrest Gump," which was directed by Robert Zemeckis and will probably garner another Oscar for its star, Tom Hanks, is a skillful, big-movie reworking of a favorite Hollywood theme: It's O.K. to be dumb as long as you're nice. If you're both, nothing can stop you, and the world will line up to hand you its rewards. Forrest Gump, who wears an expression of nobody's-home innocuousness throughout the picture, gets to play football for Bear Bryant at Alabama: he just turns up, and goes on to become an All-American. He goes to Vietnam and gets to win a Medal of Honor. He meets an old Army buddy who has fallen to shrimp fishing for a living, and, joining the business, gets to become a millionaire—as before, because he's not smart enough to do anything else. There are some obstacles along the way (Forrest's best pal dies in his arms in Vietnam; his girlfriend, in an interesting progression, becomes a sixties anti-war leftist and then a druggie, and then dies of AIDS), but not to worry: Forrest smiles and survives. At the close, we see him in the gloaming, standing with his young son under the trees on his handsome waterfront estate: a moron single parent confidently awaiting whatever else history may have in store for him.

"Forrest Gump" is a dream, too, of course: the shambles and the horror of our recent American past made harmless and sweet because the protagonist doesn't understand a moment of any of it. This movie is much more fantastic and moony than "Hoop Dreams," because the yearning struggle of inner-city athletes to extricate themselves (and their families) from their dismal lives by becoming N.B.A. millionaires isn't exactly a dream; it's something both realer and crueller—a terrific long shot. Something that isn't to be seen in either of these movies is any vestige of what used to be called without irony the American dream: the faith that we all belonged somewhere within a rational and forgiving system that in the end would reward intelligence and hard work. Our new movie dreams are far more delusional than that, and it would be enlightening and scary if some poll or prize could tell us which set of audiences—at "Hoop Dreams" or at "Forrest Gump"—needs more desperately to share its particular visions. May we have the envelope, please?

—ROGER ANGELL

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LASCHING BACK

Richard Rorty's review (Books, January 30th) of Christopher Lasch's "The Revolt of the Élites and the Betrayal of Democracy" is some of the shallowest Lasch-bashing that I have ever seen. Rorty reduces Lasch to a nostalgic Romantic longing for a "nobler past" and a self-indulgent jeremiadist unable to see all the good that so-called élites did for America in the sixties. That Lasch devoted much of his book to heavy-handedly criticizing the spiritual sterility of America is undeniable, but to accuse him of nostalgia is to suggest that an intellectual cannot be critical of what is currently wrong with America without wishing to return to some better, simpler period of the past. This is absurd.

Lasch applied his vast knowledge of America's past to a critique of some of the country's more recent cultural problems. At least Rorty gets that right. But in suggesting that "Lasch's contempt for ordinary Democrat-versus-Republican politics made for splendid jeremiads, but where real-world politics is concerned it isn't . . . relevant" Rorty misses one of the most important roles that an intellectual can fulfill: to show the public that the most important politics is often something larger than Democrat-versus-Republican.

KRISTER KNAPP
Boston, Mass.

Mr. Rorty's review of "The Revolt of the Élites" reads like a parody. What better expression of the "mingled scorn and apprehension" with which "the new élites . . . regard the masses" is there than when Rorty says that "Lasch would have despised the cynical greedheads for whom the working and lower-middle classes recently voted" and then goes on to characterize those classes as "people who believe everything Rush Limbaugh tells them, and who were shocked by Oliver North's defeat rather than his candidacy"? How better to portray liberal arrogance than by saying that Lasch "simply ignores the success of élites in widening human freedom—defying mass opinion by fighting against capital punishment, against racial hatred, and in favor of religious tolerance"?

If Rorty is serious, he misses the point when he chides Lasch for offering large ideas and "despair without counsel" instead of "concrete practical measures." Lasch despaired because the decision-makers in this country have lost the ability to lead—or even hold people together—in any decent, meaningful way. Offering these people a simple prescription for reform is irrelevant.

PAM MILLER
Philo, Calif.

EXIT WINCHELL

Until I read Harold Brodkey's article about Walter Winchell (A Critic at Large, January 30th), I was not aware that Winchell had "peaked" in the middle of the Second World War and then sort of floated off the national scene, but in retrospect I think I may have witnessed the beginning of his demise as a national figure.

I was a Secret Service agent assigned to the White House during the war years. Winchell attended F.D.R.'s press conferences from time to time. He was brash and rude, and was no friend of the regulars in the press corps. In fact, his ego led him to believe that he was a personal confidant of Mr. Roosevelt. One day in 1943, he came into the West Wing of the White House and tried to barge right into the Oval Office. He had his hand on the doorknob when my supervisor, Jim Beary, grabbed him and spun him around. Winchell let out a squawk and flew into a violent rage. He

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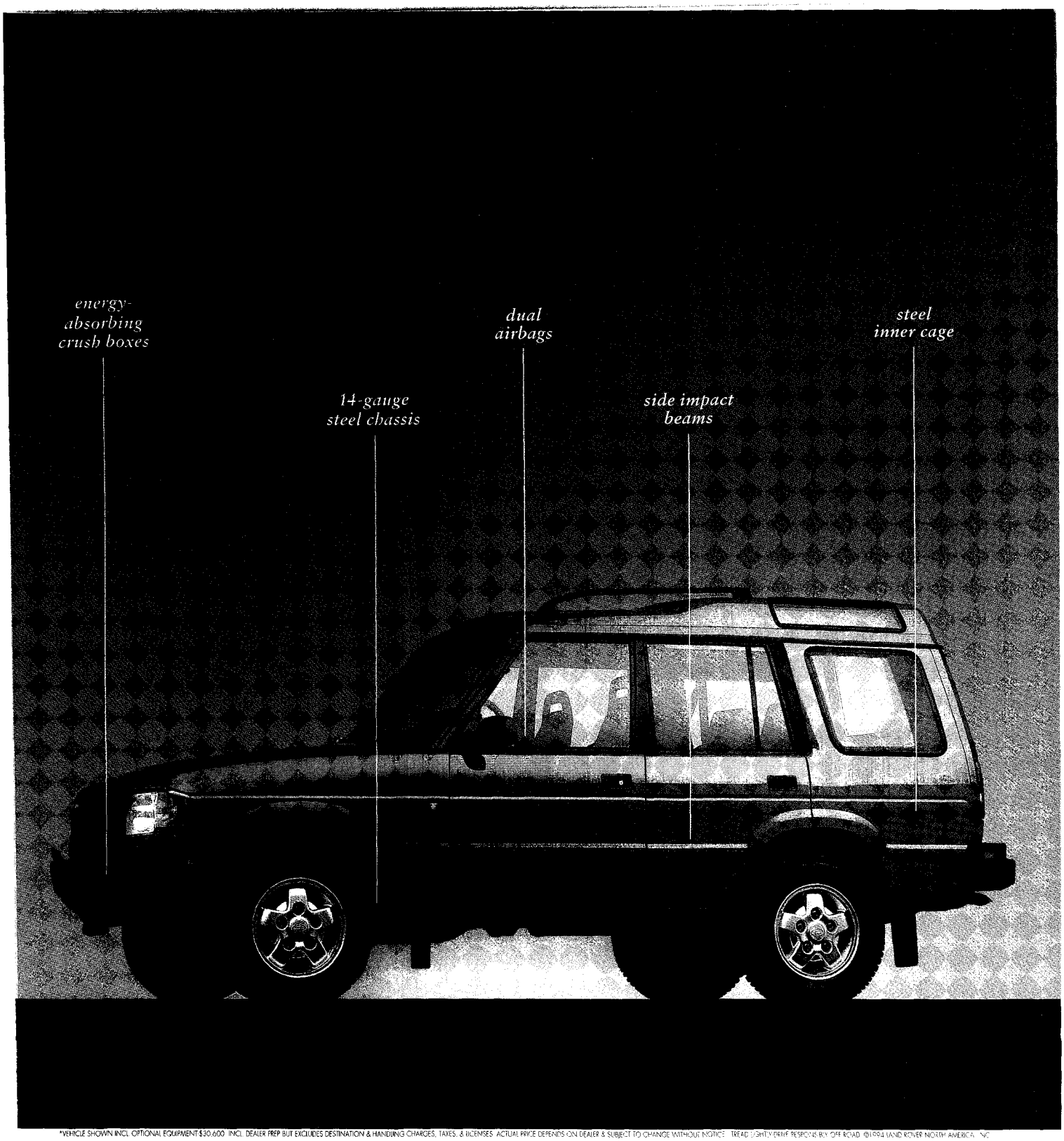

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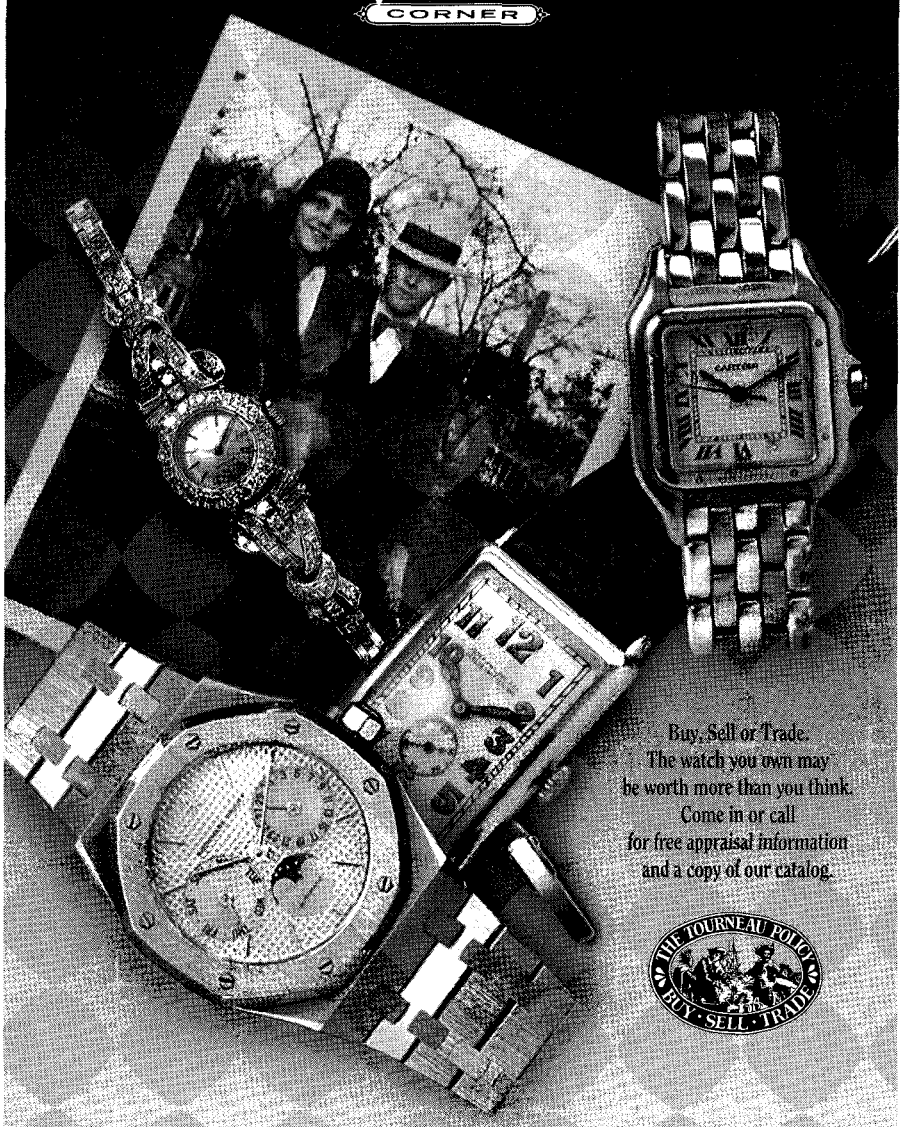

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exchanged hot words with Special Agent Beary, but Beary yielded not an inch. Finally, Winchell stormed into press secretary Stephen Early's office to lodge an irate complaint. Mr. Early, who obviously had no liking for Winchell, calmly puffed his pipe and listened but took no action against Beary.

I do not recall seeing Winchell at the White House again.

JIM GRIFFITH
Cincinnati, Ohio

INTERRACIAL HARMONY

I was surprised and offended by David Owen's subtle but clear attempt to equate Peter Norton's having a black wife with some kind of emotional pathology ("The Straddler," January 30th). As the black partner in an interracial marriage, I know that this kind of pop psychoanalysis is ubiquitous, annoying, and hurtful. Surely there are folks with the same sense of "otherness" that Owen attributes to Norton who have not married out of their race. Surely there are folks in interracial marriages who do not have a sense of "not belonging." As a journalist in a racist society, Owen should not have assumed that all readers of *The New Yorker* think as he does.

CAROLE MCDONNELL
Peekskill, N.Y.

PATE MAIL

In your amusing and otherwise accurate Talk of the Town piece on Katrina vanden Heuvel and recent changes at *The Nation* (January 30th) you refer to me as "affable, balding." Readers can judge for themselves on the basis of this letter whether I am affable. But I can assure you that I am not balding—a word that, apart from being a participle coined by *Time*, suggests an ongoing process. As my wife could have confirmed to your fact-checking department, I haven't lost a hair in ten years. That, quite simply, is because I have no hair left to lose.

VICTOR NAVASKY
The Nation
New York City

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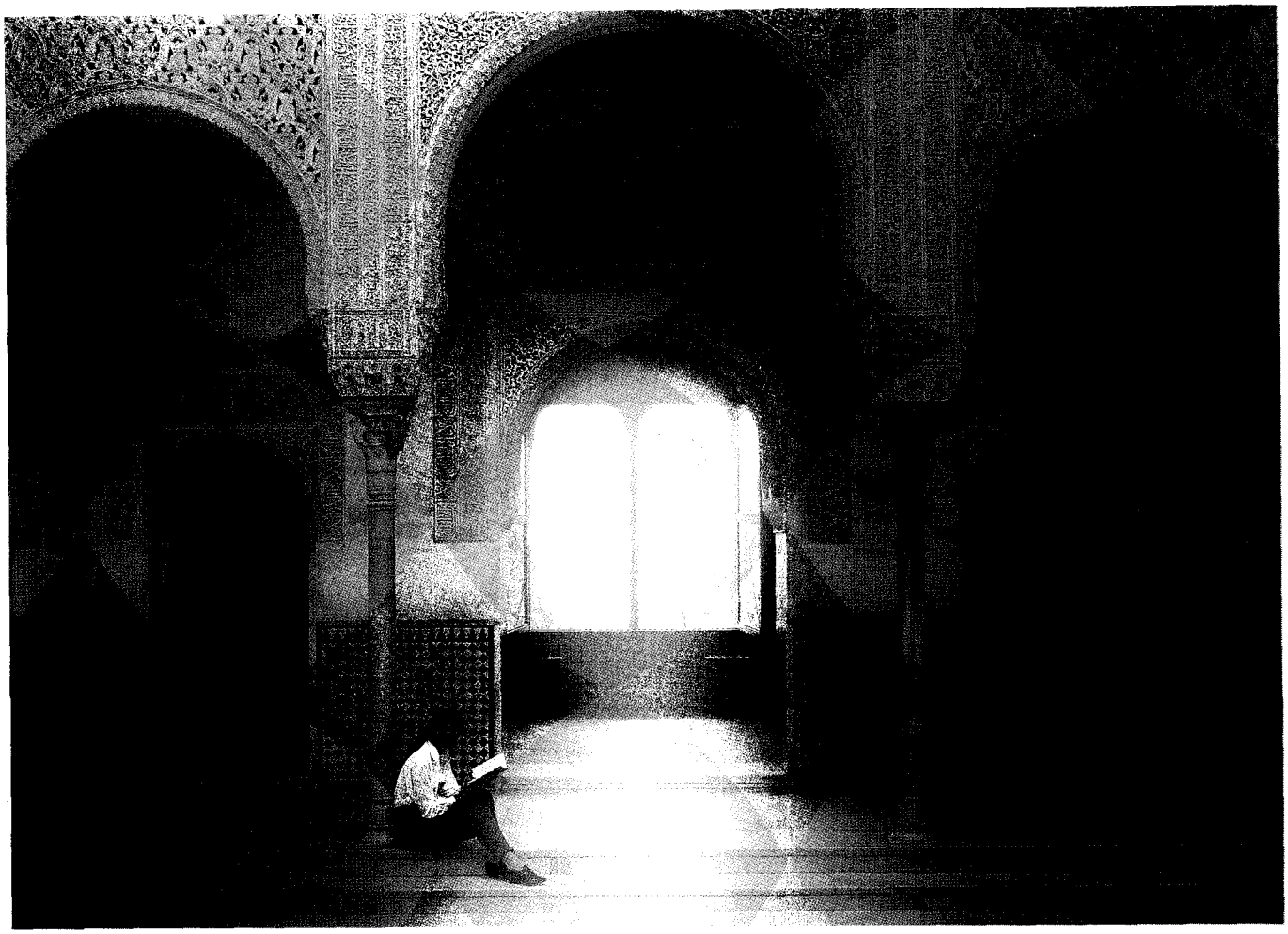

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THE THEATRE

Brainy

"THE MAN WHO," Peter Brook's adaptation of Oliver Sacks' "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat," begins a four-week run at BAM's Majestic Theatre on March 13, and it's a pleasure to see how Brook has fashioned a piece of theatre without fictionalizing Sacks' real-life case studies. The neurologist's subjects, who suffer from such conditions as visual agnosia and Tourette's syndrome, emerge as a very human group rather than a gallery of freaks—owing partly, no doubt, to the insights Brook has gained from the neurological research that his Paris-based theatre company conducted, and partly to the stagecraft he employs. "The Man Who" opens with metaphorical representations of the brain—two TV monitors, a video camera, and a VCR—and ends with the brain itself glowing forth from the TV screens. In between we witness a brave, visionary journey through the weird outskirts of consciousness.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			8	9	10	11
12	13	14				

ARCADIA—The American première of Tom Stoppard's 1993 play, with Blair Brown and Victor Garber. In previews. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

DAMN YANKEES—Last year's revival of the 1955 musical returns from a hiatus, with Jerry Lewis in his Broadway début, as Mr. Applegate. The new version is in previews through March 11. Opens March 12 at 6:30. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

DON JUAN IN CHICAGO—The legendary Spanish seducer leaves Seville for twentieth-century Chicago in a new comedy by David Ives (of "All in the Timing" fame). In previews. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 333-4052.)

FAMILY BUSINESS—The *fils-et-père* team of Ain and David Gordon wrote, directed, and appears in this comedy about a family of plumbers. Valda Setterfield (mother of Ain, wife of David) rounds out the cast. Previews begin March 10. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989.)

THE HEIRESS—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 play based on the Henry James novel "Washington Square." With Philip Bosco, Cherry Jones, Frances Sternhagen, and Jon Tenney. Two previews on March 8. Opens March 9 at 6:45. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

HOW TO SUCCEED IN BUSINESS WITHOUT REALLY TRYING—Matthew Broderick is the ambitious window washer J. Pierrepont Finch in this revival of the 1961 musical by Frank Loesser (score and lyrics) and Abe Burrows, Jack Weinstock, and Willie Gilbert (book). In previews. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

LAURA DENNIS—The Signature Theatre Company concludes its Horton Foote season with this new play. The cast includes Hallie Foote and Horton Foote, Jr. Opens March 10 at 8 and runs through April 9. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200.)

THE MAN WHO—Director Peter Brook's adaptation of Oliver Sacks' collection of essays "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat." Preview on March 11. Opens March 13 at 8 and runs through April 9. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100.)

MANHATTAN CLASS COMPANY—The group's seventh annual one-act festival features plays by Peter Lefcourt ("Sweet Talk"), Rafael Lima ("Hard Hats"), Patrick Breen ("It's Almost Like a Favor That I Do"), and Tom Burnett ("The Rocks Have Ears"). Previews through March 12. Opens March 13 at 7 and runs through April 1. (120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

MIAMI STORIES: BELLOW, MALAMUD & KLAVAN—An evening of one-act comedies: Saul Bellow's "A Wen," Laurence Klavan and Martin Blank's "The Magic Barrel" (based on the story by Bernard Malamud), and Mr. Klavan's own "If Walls Could Talk." In previews. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797.)

ROB BECKER'S DEFENDING THE CAVEMAN—A one-man comedy about the relationship between men and women, written and performed by Mr. Becker. In previews. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

RUSH LIMBAUGH IN NIGHT SCHOOL—In Charlie Varon's one-man play, the conservative talk-show host is taking Spanish at the New School with a bunch of left-wingers. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

SWINGTIME CANTEEN—A forties musical revue, with an all-female cast, including Alison Fraser and Emily Loesser. Written by Linda Thorsen Bond, William Repicci, and Charles Busch. Previews through March 13. Opens March 14 at 8. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

TRANSLATIONS—A new production of Brian Friel's 1981 play, starring Dana Delany, Brian Dennehy, Donal Donnelly, and Rufus Sewell. Howard Davies is the director. In previews. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

BEAUTY'S DAUGHTER—A one-woman show by the New York-born poet-actress Dael Orlandersmith. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes March 26.)

BEDTIME STORY and **RIDERS TO THE SEA**—A double bill of Irish plays, by Sean O'Casey and J. M. Synge, respectively. (Mott Street Theatre, 262 Mott St., studio 306. 941-8915.)

BODY SHOP—The actors think they're in a musical about the dignity of stripping; many of the men in the audience, to judge from the whoops, think they're watching a strip show. Is this a great country, or what? Walter Marks, who wrote the song "I've Gotta Be Me," bears the responsibility, and Sue Lawless, for some reason, directed. (Westbeth Theatre Center, 151 Bank St. 741-0391.)

BUK: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF CHARLES BUKOWSKI—Playwright Paul Peditto has sifted through the writings of the cult author and self-proclaimed dirty old man and come up with a disjointed series of scenes chronicling his intemperate life. Fourteen actors, most of them members of the resident Igloo ensemble, portray thirty-eight characters, who glide in and out of the noirish scenes in an alcoholic haze. Despite the group's evident passion for Bukowski, they provide a somewhat incoherent portrait of his incoherence. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes March 11.)

CAMPING WITH HENRY & TOM—Henry Ford (John Cunningham), Thomas Edison (Robert Prosky), and Warren Harding (Ken Howard) are out camping one day. . . . So begins

Christopher Duva, Jon Patrick Walker, and Peter Jacobson, in "The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)."

ERIC PALMA

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Mark St. Germain's fictional account of an actual woodland episode from 1921. The talk around the campfire is, unsurprisingly, about power: Ford lusts after it, Harding wants to abdicate it, and Edison doesn't give a good God damn. In the peaceful-looking copse that James Leonard Joy has designed, history comes alive, but it doesn't go much beyond the bickering and joshing of these three flawed titans. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Carmen—Ridiculous Theatrical Company playwrights Everett Quinton and Eureka have borrowed liberally from classic camp movies (especially "Caged") to come up with a suitably Ridiculous take on Prosper Mérimée's tragic tale. Quinton is in top form as the hot-blooded, coldhearted gypsy. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271. Closes March 26.)

Circus Life—A new comedy by Murray Schisgal, about two male law partners who fall in love with the same younger woman. Mike Burstyn, Keith Langsdale, and Tresha Rodriguez are the *trois*. (Kaufman, 534 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

The Compleat Works of Wllm Shkspr (Abridged)—Like some of the best things in life, this slapstick hour-and-a-half romp through the Bard's œuvre—carried out by three fine young gentlemen in high-tops—is utterly sophomoric and a complete waste of time. And we're not just saying that to be nice. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Death Defying Acts—A trio of short plays by Woody Allen ("Central Park West"), David Mamet ("An Interview"), and Elaine May ("Hotline"). (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

Grandma Sylvia's Funeral—The audience is part of the group of mourners in this comedy by Glenn Wein and Amy Lord Blumsack, which is set in a Jewish mortuary. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

Hapgood—Tom Stoppard's 1988 play looks at the world of espionage through the lens of particle physics, and the production is as mesmerizing as the play is bewildering. Stockard Channing, Josef Sommer, and David Strathairn give confident, watchable performances. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Closes March 26.)

Henry VI—This distillation of three plays into two long, fairly independent parts lays bare the machinations surrounding the Wars of the Roses—so bare, unfortunately, that there's little sense of character left, and you don't care who wins. A few actors (John Campion as the Duke of York, Jack Wetherall as the Earl of Warwick, Trellis Stepter as the young Richard III) invigorate their scenes through sheer force of personality, but for the most part there's a lot of yelling and running around on a very nice set. Adapted and directed by Barry Kyle. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200.)

Holiday Heart—Cheryl L. West's thoughtful and thought-provoking play, which takes place in inner-city Chicago, is named after its central character—an out-there, over-the-top drag queen (if that's not a tautology) who is the Rock of Gibraltar to a troubled next-door neighbor and her young daughter, and who is played with great vitality by Keith Randolph Smith. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

I've Got the Shakes—In the center of Richard Foreman's latest piece of metaphysical mischief, Jan Leslie Harding gives a remarkably composed performance as Madeline X, a somewhat bewildered teacher who hopes to enlighten a place called Ignorance. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650.)

Jack's Holiday—Jack the Ripper comes to New York in 1891, in a musical by Randy Courts and Mark St. Germain. With Allen Fitzpatrick, Judy Blazer, Greg Naughton, and Dennis Parlato. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes March 26.)

Jelly Roll!—The snakily elegant Vernel Bagneris plays Jelly Roll Morton, in a terrific show that traces the musician's transformation from New Orleans dandy into jazz legend. Morten Gunnar Larsen provides the thrilling piano accompaniment. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 265-1086.)

Loot—Joe Orton's 1965 farce is a good and proper lambasting of British civility, in which respect for the church, respect for the law, and respect for the dead are all highly suspect principles. Unfortunately, the Independent Theatre Company's modest production stumbles as it strives to keep pace with the bad-boy playwright. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes March 18.)

Love! Valour! Compassion!—The eight gay men in Terrence McNally's beautifully written drama connect in ways that almost any nuclear family would envy. Under the nimble direction of Joe Mantello, seven actors (including Stephen Bogardus, John Glover—doing double duty as identical twins—and the wonderful Nathan Lane) present humbling evidence of what love is and can be. (11/14/94) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

The Molière Comedies—Richard Wilbur dedicated his translations of "The School for Husbands" and "The Imaginary Cuckold" to Brian Bedford, and Mr. Bedford more than lives up to the accolade in two wonderful comic performances—as a crusty old fool and a blustery old fool. The good supporting cast includes Remak Ramsay, Malcolm Gets, and Suzanne Bertish. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes March 26.)

Oedipus at Colonus—The aftermath: less intrinsically interesting, with far too many speeches. Even so, Robert Hock's ragged, palsied, yet increasingly dignified Oedipus is worth a trip to the Pearl Theatre Company's new home. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802. Closes March 12.)

Raised in Captivity—Nicky Silver has loaded his new play with hairpin turns in mood and tone—hilarity becomes melancholy in the blink of an eye. The writing has brilliant moments that call to mind the work of Christopher Durang, Amy and David Sedaris, and Craig Lucas. There are terrific performances by Peter Frechette and Patricia Clarkson, as a brother and sister, and by Leslie Ayvazian, who doubles as their dead mother ("I may be dead, but I'm still your mother") and a profoundly deranged therapist. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874. Closes March 19.)

Show Boat—Harold Prince's bighearted production of the 1927 Jerome Kern–Oscar Hammerstein II musical is epic-size, full of life and full of vision. With John McMartin and Elaine Stritch as the patriarch and the matriarch of the floating theatre, and Lonette McKee, whose moving rendition of "Bill" is the show's most intimate moment. (10/17/94) (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Silence, Cunning, Exile—The life of photographer Diane Arbus inspired this play by Stuart Greenman. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400. Closes March 12.)

Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—The early days of rock and roll are celebrated in a musical revue in which you can expect to hear "Hound Dog," "Jailhouse Rock," "Stand by Me," "Kansas City," and more. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Spoonbread and Strawberry Wine—Norma Jean Darden—model, caterer, actress—shares recipes and talks about her family, in a performance inspired by the cookbook she wrote with her sister Carole Darden. Good food and drink are served, along with dessert and song (the rich baritone of Jou Jou Papailler), and audience members are invited to tell a few stories of their own. It all has the feel of an evening of home movies: cozy, charming, but not very interesting. (American Place, 111 W. 46th St. 840-3074. Closes March 11.)

Sunset Boulevard—Glenn Close—who has taken the monumental role of Norma Desmond and made it something all her own, in Andrew Lloyd Webber's homage to Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett's 1950 fable of Hollywood corruption and dementia—is on vacation; she returns to the show on March 21. Karen Mason is filling in. (12/5/94) (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007.)

That's Life!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Too Jewish?—Avi Hoffman's musical-theatre piece extolling the virtues of Yiddish. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Uncle Vanya—Disillusion, dissolution, and delusion, done up in a mishmash of accents and performance styles. Tom Courtenay's Vanya is the biggest disappointment: every day, thousands of acres of trees are cut down to replace the scenery he chews every night as he staggers and weaves around the stage. With Werner Klemperer, Amanda Donohoe, and the always appealing James Fox. (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)

Vita & Virginia—Eileen Atkins' Virginia Woolf shares the stage with Vanessa Redgrave's Vita Sackville-West in a play that Atkins put together from the letters that the women exchanged during their eighteen-year friendship. Redgrave is imposing and glamorous, but the brilliance of Woolf's writing stacks the theatrical deck in Atkins' favor, and she gives a quietly sensational, riveting performance. Zoe Caldwell directed. (12/12/94) (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 307-4100. Closes March 19.)

LONG RUNS

All in the Timing: John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200. . . . **Beauty and the Beast:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **Blood Brothers:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Blue Man Group/Tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **Cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **Crazy for You:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **The Fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **Grease!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **An Inspector Calls:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Kiss of the Spider Woman:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Les Misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Miss Saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **Perfect Crime:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Stomp:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. . . . **Three Tall Women:** Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200. . . . **Tony n' Tina's Wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **The Who's Tommy:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

T.W.E.E.D.—The company's annual festival includes performance pieces by John Kelly ("Born with the Moon in Cancer"), Mark Dendy ("Worlds Apart"), and Cowboy Girl ("My Secret Rodeo"). (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 924-0077. The festival closes March 19.)

The Starla Show—Actress and comedian Starla Muraz uses different characters to inventory her own personality, in a new performance work. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, at Houston St. 219-3088. March 10-11 at 10:30 and March 13 at 8. Through March 27.)

JEFF JACKSON

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DANCE

Anti-Gravity

At dinner in a Tribeca restaurant a couple of weeks ago, the choreographer Rebecca Stenn explained how she got her start in dance: "In the womb, my foot turned in." An enlightened family doctor prescribed ballet classes, she said, "as soon as I could walk and think." At four, she enrolled in the Miss Lee School of Ballet, in Detroit, graduating eventually to Juilliard and a five-year stint with MOMIX. This weekend, PerksDanceMusicTheatre, the company she co-founded, makes its New York début at the Merce Cunningham Studio. Stenn appears in ten of the evening's thirteen pieces, displaying both the lyrical precision of her Juilliard training and the athleticism and speed she discovered with MOMIX.

If anything remains of a pre-Miss Lee form, it isn't noticeable ("I don't to this day remember which foot it was"), except perhaps in a childlike preoccupation with defying gravity. In "Ocean," the third piece of the program, dancers hidden beneath a stage-size piece of fabric hold Stenn aloft, so that she seems to walk on billowing water. After her years with MOMIX, Stenn knows how to apply technical expertise in the service of theatrical illusion. In "Epilog," the evening's final piece, Stenn appears to be suspended in the air—she is, in fact, sitting in a harness at one end of a seesaw, perfectly counterbalanced by offstage weights. A judicious use of spotlights and black velvet, she explained, makes the effect of weightlessness nearly perfect. To show how it might look, she sat up and all at once seemed to float in her chair, as if you could have moved her with a feather. "You can almost hover," she said.

Merce Cunningham Dance Company—March 8 at 8: "Doubletoss," "Ground Level Overlay" (première), and "CRWDSPCR." . . . ¶ March 9 at 8: "Rune" and "Enter." . . . ¶ March 10 at 8: "Rune," "MinEvent," and "Sounddance." . . . ¶ March 11 at 2 and March 12 at 3: "Beach Birds," "Ground Level Overlay," and "CRWDSPCR." . . . ¶ March 11 at 8: "Doubletoss" and "Enter." . . . ¶ March 14 at 8: "Inventions," "MinEvent," and "Sounddance." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through March 19.)

Feld Ballets/NY—March 8, 10, and 14 at 8: "A Footstep of Air," "Evoe," "Chi" (première), and "Wolfgang Strategies." . . . ¶ March 9 at 8 and March 12 at 7:30: "Aurora II," "Love Song Waltzes," and "Doo Dah Day." . . . ¶ March 11 at 8: "Consort," "Kore," "Ogive" (première), and "Doghead & Godcatchers." . . . ¶ March 12 at 2: "A Footstep of Air," "Gnossiennes," and "Doghead & Godcatchers." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through April 9.)

Dance Theatre of Harlem—Opening performances of an engagement that will run through March 25. March 10 at 8 and March 11 at 2: "Toccata e Due Canzoni," "The Prodigal Son," and the company première of Balanchine's "Firebird." . . . ¶ March 11 at 8 and March 12 at 3: "Designs with Strings," "Othello," "Signs and Wonders" (première), and "The River." . . . ¶ March 14 at 8: "Signs and Wonders," "The Joplin Dances" (première), and "A Song for Dead Warriors." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

PerksDanceMusicTheatre—Thirteen short pieces, with live music. (Merce Cunningham Studio, 55 Bethune St. March 9-11 at 9. For information about tickets, call 721-4944.)

Gonnie Heggen—As a film of her street-festival duet with Miss Majorette (a Limburger native on his annual drag outing) plays in the background, Heggen performs a live, abstract dance with Yasuko Yokoshi. This duet is further contrasted with baton routines from the ten-member Hofstra University Twirl Team, who march on and off the stage. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. March 9-12 at 8:30.)

Phyllis Lamhut Dance Company—The five-member company, in the première of "Deadly Sins," a dance-theatre work on nineties excesses. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 9-11 at 8 and March 12 at 3 and 8.)

"Soul Search"—This year's New Faces / New Voices / New Visions performance series opens with dancers Gabri Christa & Torrin Cummings, Robert Henry Johnson, and the Andrea E. Woods ensemble. (Davis Hall, City College, Convent Ave. at 134th St. 650-7100. March 11 at 7:30 and March 12 at 3.)

Ballet-Théâtre de Bordeaux—The first American tour of the company that Napoleon called "the rose of all dance companies of the French Empire." (Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. March 12 at 2.)

NIGHT LIFE

The Phenom

At twenty-two, Christian McBride is already a mature musician, a jazz bassist whose tone and taste and ideals are simply not of this era. Standing at the crossroads mapped out by three legendary bassists—Ray Brown, the great mainstream player; Paul Chambers, hard-bop's M.V.P.; and Ron Carter, the modern master—McBride has fashioned harmonic complexity and gutsy blues into a distinct new personality; he employs his spectacular technique only in the service of poetry. Unlike so many of his contemporaries, he understands the enormous power that comes from mating a gorgeous tone with a true and logical melody. In their sheer rightness, his solos, and even his accompaniments, become songs within songs.

It's strange to hear McBride play with his peers—Joshua Redman, say, or Benny Green, to name two of the many players he has worked with—because he has a way of making other young players sound like gifted children. At a Lincoln Center concert two years ago (when he was twenty), he stood comfortably alongside McCoy Tyner, Bobby Hutcherson, and Gary Bartz, and these established giants are the company he should keep. On March 7-12, McBride makes his début as a bandleader, at the Village Vanguard. He has already made a record as a leader, "Gettin' to It"—a pleasant enough neo-hard-bop romp—but it doesn't do him justice. You need to hear him live.

CONCERTS

"To Prez with Love"—Lester Young's epochal recordings grow more luminous and mysterious with every passing year. The impressive lineup saluting the once and future king of the tenor saxophone includes Tommy Flanagan, Buddy Tate, and Toshiko Akioshi. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. March 12 at 7. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Cameo/Teena Marie/The Gap Band—A funkathon out on the Island. Oh, yes. (Westbury Music Fair. 1-516 334-0800. March 8 at 8.)

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"The Latin Tinge"—Jelly Roll Morton nailed it when he said that the secret ingredient of jazz is "the Latin tinge." Flaunting those crazy percolating rhythms will be the Lincoln Center Latin Jazz Orchestra (conducted by Tito Puente), and Jerry Gonzalez and the Fort Apache Band. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 10 at 8.)

Far East Side Band—Jazz violinist Jason Kao Hwang's outfit. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. March 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 545-7536.)

Spin Doctors—This loose, entertaining three-chord rock band has a knack for hook-laden tunes. It's a winning formula, and they milk it with ease. With the Hatters. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. March 11 at 8.)

Don Byron—Byron and an eight-piece jazz group will play the clarinettist's new score for the 1928 silent film "The Scar of Shame." (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. March 11 at 8.)

Andy Statman—Way before klezmer was hip, Statman was reaching back to the shtetls with his mournful clarinet and pushing forward to the New World with his mandolin fusions. When a man has honed his craft at bar mitzvahs and brisses, you know he's the real deal. This concert will be a dance party. (Ansche Hesed, 251 W. 100th St. 865-0600. March 11 at 9.)

Stonewall Chorale—The fifty-member group offers an afternoon of Gershwin and Porter tunes. (Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. March 12 at 4. For information about tickets, call 262-9544.)

"Heavenly Jazz"—The series presents guitarist Howard Alden, bassist Michael Moore, and trumpeter Jon-Erik Kelso. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. March 12 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Keith Jarrett—Say what you will about histrionics—whenever Jarrett takes the stage for one of his marathon solo performances, chords crash, tremolos ring, and the earth moves. There's also a lot of grunting. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the maestro's landmark Cologne concert, and his rampant eclecticism and sleight-of-hand virtuosity still have an undeniable charm. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. March 12 at 7:30.)

CLUBS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. March 10 belongs to the **tommy sands** trio.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Decent sight lines, great greasy food, prodigiously talented waitresses, and a consistent roster of high-quality acts. March 10: **townes van zandt**. March 11: **magic dick** and **jay geils** (of the J. Geils band). March 13: Those a-cappella oddballs, **the bobs**.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—**ivy**, one of the better wispy combos to come along in a while, plays on March 8. March 10: **life in a blender**. March 11: **babe the blue ox**. This ferocious little trio, sort of a cross between King Crimson and Primus, has earned a great deal of praise from the homegrown media (the New York *Press* recently called them the best band in New York). March 13: **new radiant storm king**.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. March 10: **killdozer**. . . . ¶ Next door, at CB's Gallery, **bubble** plays on March 10.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. March 9-11: Guitarist **jimmy rogers**, a former colleague of Muddy Waters.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. March 8: **mohegan**. March 10 belongs to the **black rock coalition**. March 11: Cocktail-lounge cool with **black velvet flag**. March 13: "The Honeysuckles," an ongoing live soap opera. March 14: A reading with writer-litigator Gordon Lish. The **mingus big band** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—**pizzicato five**, a Tokyo trio that plays very groovy American-style pop, brings its slightly insane, danceable fun to town on March 10. The group's vocalist, Maki Nomiya, sings in both English and Japanese and at times sounds like she has listened to one too many Claudine Longet albums. March 11: **skid row**. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—March 11: **lords of acid**. March 14: **chris connelly**. With Low Pop Suicide. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side blues. March 14: The **choosy mothers**.

Match, 160 Mercer St. (343-0020)—This hip SoHo *boîte* is the place to be every Sunday night, thanks to the **shorty jackson legacy blues band**, featuring the eighty-nine-year-old **laurel watson**, the original "last of the red-hot mamas" (according to Doc Cheatham) and torch singer par excellence. Dining.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Pass the long bar and you'll find an exposed-brick room and a stage packed with some very hip rock acts. March 10: **toshi reagon**. March 11: **blue rodeo**. March 12: **industrial tee pee**. March 13: **jenni muldaur**, a moody singer-songwriter and the daughter of Maria ("Midnight at the Oasis") Muldaur.

Monkey Bar, 60 E. 54th St. (838-2600)—Beyond the monkey murals, there's a bright see-and-be-seen dining arena that's perfect for committing high-profile indiscretions in a strapless gown. But the place to be is the dark and crowded bar up front, by the grand piano, where the bar stools look like plump olives. You perch on the pimiento. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—This spacious and agreeable club offers a consistent lineup of blues greats. March 10: Zydeco with **terrance simien**. March 11: Funk with **milo z.**

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—March 10: The **authority**. March 11: **first house**. On Sundays, Wetlands presents hardcore matinées.

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—In the Oak Room, **peter howard** salutes the great Broadway musicals. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through March 12: a double bill featuring the **eddie palmieri** octet and the **ray barretto** sextet. Palmieri's fervent hard-bop and salsa-inflected rhythms don't always translate onstage, where the cigar-chomping pianist tends to grandstand, but when the pieces do fall together, they're savage. Barretto weighs in with authority. The **joe zawinul** trio and **bill evans & push** begin a weeklong run on March 14. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through March 11: the **freddy cole** trio. A refined vocalist, Nat's brother obviously has mixed feelings about being kin to a legend. One of the highlights of his set is the assertive anthem "I'm Not My Brother,

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LATIN DANCING

The most popular child of the Cuban rumba—the great mother-root that nourished the Dominican merengue and the Puerto Rican plena, not to mention Bo Diddley, Dizzy Gillespie, and the Rolling Stones—is salsa. Having made its first appearance in New York clubs in the early nineteen-seventies, for a sad time in the eighties salsa got a reputation as tacky, but it has reëmerged as a Latin-American family value, with grandparents and grandchildren turning up to dance at the same shows. These days it's one of New York's most vital musical phenomena. Depending on the venue and the band, a good dance can feel like a celebration, a seduction, or a prayer. The following list of Latin-dance clubs around Manhattan is geared to the newcomer. Some of them hold classes periodically, or let you in free or serve up free food, so it's worth calling ahead to see what the deal is.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Every Monday at around 7 P.M., beginners line up for a demonstration and dance class; the seven-dollar admission lets you stick around to catch the act playing later that night. S.O.B.'s is the dean of New York salsa clubs, and the music tends toward super-authentic (a Santería priest in from Cuba on a special religious visa) rather than pop—somewhere in the crowd there's likely to be an ethnomusicologist who can fill you in on the meaning of the singer's coquettish moves and long, percussive stanzas. S.O.B.'s is roomy, but the dance floor could be bigger.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The peach walls and Art Deco curves of this two-floor club are apparently meant to evoke the glamorous Meyer Lansky Havana of the fifties, but actually, with its gigantic video screen and its roving groups of young, attractive twenty-somethings, Les Poulets comes closer to a typical angst-ridden New York club than any of the other salsa hangouts. (Beefy bouncers frisk you on the way in.) Such is the power of the music, though, that once the customers are dancing, they no longer look like zombies. Bands here tend to be salsa's top acts. The dancing picks up around 11:30.

Bayamo, 704 Broadway (475-5151)—A gigantic Cuban-Chinese restaurant that is a tribute to two great island melting pots: Cuba, where Chinese indentured laborers evolved (as elsewhere) into restaurant owners, and Manhattan, where a décor of faux palm trees, Chinese New Year dragons, and mirrors seems perfectly natural. Bayamo has what may be the most forgiving salsa scene in the city, perhaps because of the regulars who come every week and goof around like they're in their own living rooms. That's not to say that the house band, Cruz Control, is rinky-dink—the bongo player, Louis Bauzo, is a Juilliard-trained musician and a leading teacher of the folkloric drumming from which Afro-Carribean music derives. Cruz Control performs three sets every Tuesday. The first, at 8, is Latin jazz; the stuff to dance to starts about an hour later.

Café Novecento, 343 West Broadway (925-4706)—A dark and tiny storefront bar with artsy photocollages on the walls and sizable European and Latin-American contingents . . . in other words, your typical boho SoHo joint, except that there's dancing. (The cramped space makes it a little awkward, though.) The house band, Afro Andes, does its thing Fridays and Saturdays from midnight to 3 A.M. Right now the club is closed during the week for renovations, but when it reopens full time at the end of March, the previous routine—Latin jazz on Tuesdays and flamenco on Wednesdays—can be expected to return, in one form or another.

Club Broadway, 2551 Broadway (864-7600)—With its low, low ceilings, endless rows of tables, and broad, smooth floor, Club Broadway vaguely resembles a bowling alley. But what better surface to dance on? The club is unassuming; though it's full of serious dancers, fledgling hoofers won't be scared off. Friday and Saturday nights feature live salsa acts. This is one of the best all-purpose clubs in New York. On Fridays, admission is free for women before 10, but people usually start arriving an hour later, and, as at the Copacabana, the dancing frequently lasts until dawn.

Copacabana, 617 W. 57th St. (582-2672)—Late in 1993, when its lease expired, the Copacabana moved west from its old home at Fifth Avenue and 60th Street, where for more than five decades it had been *the* high-class Latin club in the city. The new Copa is just as spectacular, though, with its spinning, sparkling globe overhead and, on the wall behind the bands, a pulsing electric display of palm trees and sunsets. Though the atmosphere verges on kitsch, it's refreshingly irony-free—the ghosts of Desi Arnaz and the other great Cuban musicians who used to play here triumph easily over the spirit of Barry Manilow. This is the place to come once you've graduated from novice to real dancer. There's an age minimum (women must be twenty-three, men twenty-five), and it's a good idea to dress up a little. The Copa usually schedules two big acts every Friday and Saturday. In back is a second dance floor with a d.j. spinning American disco.

El Vasilon, 151 Avenue C, at 9th St. (no phone)—This minuscule East Village dive, one flight up from an American Legion office, has been going strong for five years. (The people who run it used to book bands at the nearby restaurant Boca Chica when it had live shows.) The music and dancing are the real thing, but the atmosphere is friendly and laissez-faire—not scene-oriented at all. There's a pool table and a small bar for those who just want to hang out. Doors open at 10 on Fridays and Saturdays, and the salsa starts just before midnight. On Sundays, rumba gets going at 6.

ANTHONY RUSSO

La Belle Epoque, 827 Broadway (254-6436)—Though the elegance of this second-floor ballroom is true to its name (there are original cast-iron Métro-station markers, a pewter-topped bar, and bow windows overlooking Broadway), the club is free of pretension. With a crowd of regulars, a stage packed with Cuban musicians, and a relaxed buffet dinner served from polished trays, it's reminiscent of a jubilant wedding reception. The club is open for salsa only one night a week—Thursday, from 7 to midnight.

I'm Me"; another is a Nat King Cole medley. **Johnny King**, who settles in for a week starting March 13, is a bright and resourceful new pianist. Dining.

Café Pierre, 2 E. 61st St. (940-8185)—Vocalist-pianist **Kathleen Landis** celebrates her tenth year at the Pierre with a program of Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer songs. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—**Barbara Cook** is the main attraction at this urbane dinner-and-music room; she's backed by her longtime pianist and arranger, **Wally Harper**. Cook's voice remains almost defiantly that of the nineteen-fifties Broadway ingénue, and her material, particularly her homage to Mabel Mercer, is as supple as a fresh corsage. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, the suave and sybaritic **Ronny Whyte** is in attendance.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **Donald Johnston** is the featured pianist; on weekends he performs with a trio. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—March 10-11: The **Chip Shelton Jazztet**. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. March 7-10: Saxophonist **Pharoah Sanders**. Unbridled passion and skill, or an evening of squeakaphonics? Sanders has actually mellowed over the years; his sonic maelstroms are now regularly tempered by his soulful balladeering.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. March 8-11: **Valerie Capers** and **John Robinson**. Dining.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—March 13: The **David Murray** big band, conducted by **Butch Morris**.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **Gene Bertoncini** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Metropolis, 31 Union Sq. W. (675-2300)—March 10-11: A tribute to Fats Waller, featuring **Al Casey** and **Red Richards**. Tuesdays are given over to the **George Gee Orchestra**, a seventeen-piece swing band.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. **Leslie Uggams** is the current diva-in-residence. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through March 12: **Henry Threadgill & Very Very Circus**. The saxes bray, the trumpets bark, the tubas bellow, and one joyous mess of sound erupts. If new jazz can ever be labelled fun, this is the stuff. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **Miles Evans** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—Through March 12: **KT Sullivan**. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through March 12: wunderkind bassist **Christian McBride**. The **Vanguard Jazz Orchestra** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—March 8-11: The **John Hicks** quintet. Intense, inventive, and garrulous, this pianist combines the harmonic daring and aggressive stance of McCoy Tyner with the romantic fluency of Roland Hanna—not a bad middle ground. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through March 11: **Junior Mance** (piano), **Calvin Hill** (bass), and **Joe Temperley** (drums). Dining.

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ART

Dark Shadows

In a moment of self-mockery, Christian Boltanski once described himself as the Claude Lelouch of contemporary art. Like the director of that shameless tearjerker "A Man and a Woman," Boltanski traffics in emotionally loaded themes—war, death, the loss of childhood, the Holocaust. But this French artist is actually something of a skeptic, a hardheaded (though not hardhearted) manipulator who acknowledges the ravages of history (and personal histories) but casts doubt on our ability to grasp their meaning. One of his earliest works, "Research and Presentation of Everything That Remains of My Childhood" (1969), was a book about his own distant past that revealed almost nothing concrete and was deliberately packed with lies.

In Boltanski's recent work, now on view at Marian Goodman (24 West 57th Street; through March 11), the artist has once again created theatrical tableaux that are spooky and unsettling. He conjures a dramatic Caravaggesque play of light and shadow with simple raw materials. The grandest set piece is "Human" (1994), an installation of eleven hundred black-and-white archival photographs of criminals and victims, dimly illuminated by dozens of bare light bulbs dangling from the ceiling. In previous works, Boltanski segregated the guilty and the innocent; here he provocatively mixes them up in a twilit house of shades.

Grandma Moses and Earl Cunningham, at Galerie St. Etienne.

KATHRYN OSBORN

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"R. B. Kitaj," a retrospective of more than seventy paintings by the expatriate artist who for nearly four decades has lived and worked in London. Through May 14. . . . ¶ "The French Renaissance in Prints from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France" gives plenty of play to the religious and dynastic violence of the period but adds another dimension by documenting the complex artistic temperament that flourished during that tormented era. Through March 19. . . . ¶ "Orientalism: Visions of the East in Western Dress." Through March 19. . . . ¶ "Greek Gold." Forget embarrassment—this is a *humiliation* of riches, as splendid an exhibition of Classical jewelry as we're ever likely to see. The workmanship throughout is so delicate that you may want to bring a magnifying glass. Through March 26. . . . ¶ "I Tell My Heart: The Art of Horace Pippin." Through April 30. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A retrospective of video installations, sculptural objects, walk-in environments, and sound pieces by Bruce Nauman. Through May 23. . . . ¶ "Kandinsky: Compositions." Wassily Kandinsky, the Russian painter who invented abstractionism, groped his way there with gingerly care, marking the milestones in his evolution with a numbered series of large-scale "Compositions." In this quiet little blockbuster exhibition, the museum has united the seven surviving canvases for the first time. Enhanced by preliminary studies and by photographs of the lost works, the exhibit documents the progress of Kandinsky's expanding vision with elegance and precision. Through April 25. . . . ¶ "MOMA and Airplane Parts." Since early in the century, when Picasso collaged bits of detritus and Duchamp exhibited a urinal, artists have been drawn to the possibilities in recycling junk as art. Nancy Rubins' contribution to the genre—a massive, sprawling assemblage of fragments of wrecked fuselages, engine casings, and wings, all suspended from the museum's ceiling by metal cables—could win her accolades as the Bernini of refuse. Through March 14. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A mid-career retrospective of seventy paintings by Ross Bleckner includes his stripe paintings; suites from the "Architecture of the Sky," "Invisible Heaven," and "Unknown Quantities of Light" series; and new canvases. Through May 14. . . . ¶ Ten years of work by Félix González-Torres: strings of light bulbs, spills of candy, stacks of printed matter, photo-jigsaw puzzles, "date-caption" pieces, and photos of his billboards. Through May 10. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—Fifty-six paintings by Antoni Tàpies, in a retrospective of the Catalan artist's career. Through April 23. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Black Male: Representations of Masculinity in Contemporary American Art." In spite of the explosive subject, it's a flat, dispiriting, and even visually inert exhibit. It does include several fine works of art, though, such as three realist portraits from the nineteen-seventies by Barkley L. Hendricks. Through March 15. . . . ¶ "Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney: Printmakers' Patron." This modest exhibition—a tribute to the museum's founder—includes many nice pieces by, among others, Stuart Davis, Edward Hopper, Paul Cadmus, and Whitney's gloomy favorite, John Sloan. Through March 12. . . . ¶ "Franz Kline: Black & White, 1950-1961." Through March 12. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Expedition" is a new way for visitors to blaze a trail through the museum: you set out from the "base camp" near the entrance with a free guidebook, or you can rent a CD player with a recorded guide. On the way, children can get their "passports" stamped at five different "field stations." (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Thomas Cole: Landscape into History" presents arcadian and allegorical visions of New World wilderness by the English-born founder of the Hudson River school. Through April 2. . . . ¶ "Grand Reserves" gives museumgoers a chance to see eleven recently restored and reframed paintings from the museum's storerooms, including works by William Merritt Chase, Louis Remy Mignot, Arthur B. Davies, and others. Through March 26. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Books, catalogues, signs, and stationery, mostly from the fifties and sixties, by the graphic designer Elaine Lustig Cohen. Through May 23. . . . ¶ "Good Offices and Beyond: The Evolution of the Workplace" surveys the development of equipment designed to manage paper, numbers, time, and information. Through March 19. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—All the varieties of traditional Japanese dolls are on display in "Ningyô: The Art of the Human Figurine." The dolls are primarily from the early nineteenth century, and many have particular functions: to heal the sick, bestow fertility, grant wishes, or help one pass an exam. Through April 2. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Camille Pissarro: Impressionist Innovator" includes many of the artist's landscapes, figure paintings, family portraits, and Japonism-inspired design experiments. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesday evenings until 8.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—The Academy's hundred-and-seventieth annual exhibition includes works by Paul Cadmus, Jacob Lawrence, Rosemarie Beck, and Marianna Pineda. Through April 2. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—Fifty large-scale photographs by Andres Serrano. Through April 9. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays until 8.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—Forty-seven paintings and works on paper by Emma Amos. Through March 19. . . . ¶ "Sam Gilliam: Recent Monoprints." Through May 14. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

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GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)

Joe Andoe—Paintings that look like antique sepia-toned photographs, containing landscape and horse imagery. Opens March 8. Through April 15. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Polly Apfelbaum—Wall works and drawings that incorporate bedsheets, pieces of dyed fabric, and fragments of photographs. Opens March 11. Through April 22. (Hirschl & Adler Modern, 21 E. 70th St.)

Milton Resnick—New oils by the veteran abstract painter. Opens March 7. Through April 1. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

Donald Sultan—Brand new paintings, ranging from one to eight feet square, of dominoes, butterflies, fruits, and flowers. Opens March 8. Through April 1. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

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Robert Arneson (1930-92)—Eight bronze sculptures that the artist made during the last three years of his life. Through April 1. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Christian Boltanski—Two recent installations. Through March 11. (Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

John Bowman—Imagined aerial and close-up views of cities, inspired by the artist's recent travels in Central Europe. Through April 1. (De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St.)

Earl Cunningham (1893-1977) / **Grandma Moses** (1860-1961)—A pairing of work by two folk painters who were stylistic soulmates but whose careers and creative visions could not have been more different. Through March 18. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

Roni Horn—Some of these tiny, text-based gouaches have a certain cool wit and gravity ("Being Purple" is amusingly reminiscent of early Ed Ruscha); too often, though, the texts are heavy-handed, like something Gertrude Stein might have tossed off in a second—and thrown away as quickly. Through March 11. (Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St.)

Robert Kushner—Paintings of flowers, fruits, and vegetables, similar in theme to the enormous murals the artist has installed at the Gramercy Tavern. Through April 8. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Ida Lorentzen—This Norway-based American artist has painted the same interior seven times, with seven different arrangements of a few pieces of wood furniture; some of the furniture is on exhibit with the paintings. Her scumbled surfaces are fussy, and the severe Nordic elegance leaves one a bit chilly. Through March 16. (Babcock, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Agnes Martin—Recent work. Martin's career is an invaluable corrective to those who regard minimalism as the preserve of crochety old men. Her pale stripe paintings may seem low-impact initially, but they reward sustained contemplation. Through March 18. (Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St.)

Elizabeth Newman—Constructions that project a strangely fuzzy, feel-good Surrealism tinged with a happy feminism. A prayer bench flanked with pairs of worn white baby shoes filters girlhood through a Proustian gauze. A pair of assemblages, called beds, amount to the 57th Street version of sugar and spice versus snips and snails: the female one has rubber nipples protruding through stretched blue silk and spraying raffia; the male one has dog biscuits. Through March 18. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Martin Puryear—Four large wood sculptures and one large tar-and-mesh piece. Through April 15. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Don Van Vliet—In 1982, the avant-garde rock musician Captain Beefheart, *né* Don Van Vliet, abandoned music for painting. His influences are obvious—Kline is there in the bold black thunderbolts that crash across the frame; Twombly has left his mark in the scribbling and color play. But the best of these paintings, such as the crude, earth-toned "Paris Cow," have a raw magic you find only in the work of autodidacts. Through March 18. (Werner, 21 E. 67th St.)

"Material Dreams"—What could be more appropriate for a department-store gallery than an exhibition of works made from fabric? This group show contains the most beautiful object on Fifth Avenue at the moment: a floor-to-ceiling screen of cloth flowers, the kind appliquéd to the bodices of tacky cocktail dresses. Crafted by Jim Hodges and the Fabric Workshop/Museum of Philadelphia, it shimmers like a prom queen's dream. Through March 11. (Gallery at Takashimaya, 693 Fifth Ave., at 54th St. Open Mondays, and Thursday evenings until 8.)

"Neo-Dada: Redefining Art, 1958-62"—An admirable attempt to fit under one handy rubric works of art that have been variously described as Fluxus, New Realism, Happenings, and proto-Pop. Fifty-eight works, by Arman, Allan Kaprow, Yves Klein, Jean Tinguely, and others, are on view. Through March 18. (Equitable, Seventh Ave. at 52nd St. Open Mondays.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Manuel Neri / Martin Naylor—Marble and painted-bronze figurative sculptures. / New paintings in pink and orange that are simpler than the artist's usual mixed-medium installations. Opens March 11. Through April 15. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

Robert Whitman—Six new installations that employ water, video projections, and other objects. In one piece, video images of landscapes are projected onto sheets of falling black water. Opens March 11. Through April 15. (Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St.)

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Jonathan Borofsky—A retrospective of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and videos. Through April 1. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Lawrence Fane—Recent wood sculptures by an artist who usually works in steel. Through March 18. (Bace, 39 Wooster St.)

Jutta Koether—Retro neo-expressionist paintings rendered in acrid Crayola colors. Through March 12. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Tom Otterness—New sculptures in aluminum, bronze, or steel, of a thumb, a hand, a foot, an eye, and other body parts. Also on view are ink-on-paper studies and more finished renderings in graphite and watercolor. Through March 25. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. . . . ¶ Works by Otterness and by the Ghanaian sculptor Bright Bimpong are at Skoto, 25 Prince St., through March 25. Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 4:30 to 8; Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 8.)

David Reed—A show of abstract paintings, with a twist. One room in the gallery has been done up as James Stewart's bedroom in Hitchcock's "Vertigo"; above the bed hangs one of the artist's new paintings (the others are in an adjacent room). Next to the bed, a videotape loop from the movie features the same painting digitally inserted above the bed. Whoa. Through March 19. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Ray Smith—"Portraits of American Writers," a group of new paintings on wood and canvas. Through March 18. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

"Duck!"—A large sampling of confrontational works from 1927 to the present, including pieces by Weegee, Warhol, Ed Ruscha, Cindy Sherman, and many others. Guns abound; the most upsetting images, however, deal with such inner anxieties as fear, denial, and anguish. The bar across the street may profit from the stream of shaken visitors leaving the gallery. Through March 11. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Group Show—This new gallery's inaugural exhibition features paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs by thirty-one artists,

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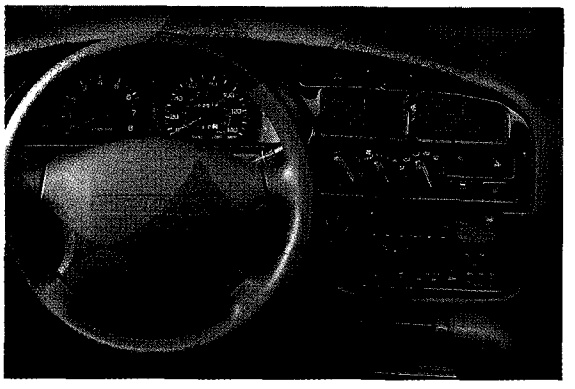

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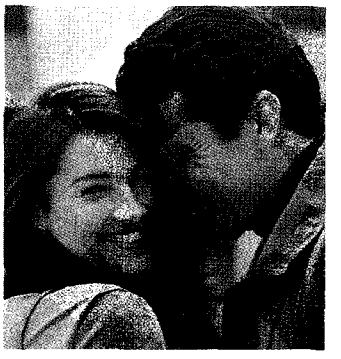

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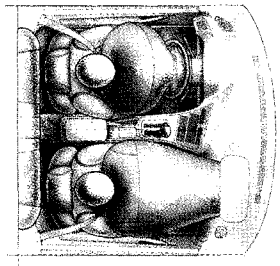

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including Robert Adams, Ellen Phelan, Charles Ray, Kay Rosen, Robert Therrien, and Bill Jacobsen. Through March 12. (Morris, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

(Auction houses display their wares several days before most sales and welcome the merely curious along with the potential bidder. Call the numbers listed for viewing schedules.)

Bonanzas for Book Lovers—An auction of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century books. (Swann Galleries, 104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. March 9 at 10:30.) . . . ¶ An antiquarian book fair at Metropolitan Antiques. (110 W. 19th St. 463-0200. March 10-12.)

"Works on Paper"—Sanford Smith's annual show, which this year brings together ninety-five international dealers, offers the full range of works on paper, from prints and drawings to watercolors and photography. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. March 10-12. For information, call 777-5218.)

Artexpo '95—The seventeenth annual installment of this fine-arts supermarket brings together four hundred and fifty exhibitors from twenty-five countries—and one of them is bound to have a painting in just the right shade to complement your new sofa. (Jacob K. Javits Convention Center, Eleventh Ave. between 34th and 39th Sts. March 11-13. For information, call 1-800 331-5706.)

PHOTOGRAPHY

Aaron Siskind (1903-91)—The artist's last series of photographs is the "Tar Pictures"—close-up views of streaks of tar on the asphalt roads of New England. Opens March 9. Through April 29. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

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Lois Conner / Anton Stankowski—Panoramic views of ruins, temples, and towns in Cambodia and Vietnam. / Vintage twenties and thirties prints of industrial objects: steel springs, porcelain telegraph-cable insulators, nails in paper wrapping, etc. Through April 15. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

Gregory Crewdson—Color photographs of birds, squirrels, butterflies, and other fauna in elaborately detailed large-scale dioramas. Through March 25. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

Ted Croner—New York City night scenes of moving cars and luminous buildings, taken in the late forties and early fifties. Through April 8. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Nan Goldin—The artist's reworked "Ballad of Sexual Dependency" (1982), a forty-five-minute color-slide-with-soundtrack presentation, is being screened three times a day, at 1, 3, and 5. Also on view are new medium-format pictures taken in Tokyo, Berlin, Salzburg, and New York, and twelve large-scale works. Through April 16. (Marks, 522 W. 22nd St. Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Dorothea Lange (1895-1965)—"American Photographs," a selection of works from throughout the artist's career. Through April 30. (International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Danny Lyon—A large-scale exhibition representing many phases of a diverse career, from Lyon's photographs of the civil-rights movement and his trademark shots of bikers, hot-rodders, and hippies to intimate photomontages of his family. The most powerful images are those done in Texas prisons in 1967-68. Through April 8. (Lowinsky, 578 Broadway.)

Joel Meyerowitz—A collection of photographs in which the artist explores the nature of cities—specifically St. Louis, Atlanta, New York, and St. Petersburg (Russia). Through April 8. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

Richard Misrach—Selections from the "Salt Flats" series and from a new series focussing on clouds. Through March 18. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

Sebastião Salgado—A collection of two hundred and fifty photographs, titled "Workers: An Archaeology of the Industrial Age." Through May 26. (International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Naomi Savage—"Men in Music—1949" includes portraits of John Cage, Virgil Thomson, Paul Bowles, and Gian Carlo Menotti. Also on view are recent color laser prints on gold foil. Through April 1. (Snyder, 20 W. 57th St.)

Victor Schrager / Jungjin Lee—Images of birds in classical Audubon-style arrangements. / A group of handmade triptychs with desert and body imagery, in which an emulsion has been applied by hand on rice paper. Through March 25. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Andres Serrano—Fifty large-scale photographs, including examples from all of the artist's thematic series since 1983. Through April 9. (The New Museum, 583 Broadway. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturdays until 8.)

Robert Yarber—Nocturnal landscape views of cemeteries, casinos, quick stops, and factories, all just as eerily lit as the artist's paintings. Through March 11. (Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway.)

Self-portrait by Andres Serrano (New Museum).

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Light 'n' Lovely

THE word "semiclassical," once dear to record-club marketers, seems to have quietly dropped from usage. Much of the music that was sold under that label was negligible, but occasionally the world of light music has harbored real genius—a Johann Strauss, Jr., a Malcolm Arnold, a Leroy Anderson.

Anderson was no lightweight when it came to musical training (strict composition studies with Piston and Enesco and mastery of six instruments) or intellectual curiosity (fluency in eight languages and a passion for Old Norse). But his calling was composing the featherweight masterpieces that leave so many listeners smiling. "The Typewriter," "The Syncopated Clock," and "The Waltzing Cat" may border on corniness, but they all boast an immediately recognizable style and unswerving attention to compositional detail. An Anderson piece isn't easily forgotten. But one was: his Piano Concerto, a rare attempt to conquer a fully classical form. The three-movement piece was premièred in 1953 and performed again the following year, but then the composer withdrew it for revisions. It was still languishing in a drawer when he died, in 1975, and is just now reëntering the repertoire. When pianist Jeffrey Biegel and Skitch Henderson's New York Pops give the concerto its first New York airing, at Carnegie Hall on March 10, listeners can judge for themselves whether Anderson's large-scale work was up to the standard of his classic semiclassics.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; and for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—La bohème, with Mary Mills, Diana Soviero, Luis Lima, and Roberto Frontali; conducted by John Fiore. (March 8 at 8.) . . . With Nucia Focile as Mimì. (March 11 and March 14 at 8.) . . . **La traviata,** with Veronica Villarroel, Frank Lopardo, and Juan Pons; Mr. Fiore. (March 9 and March 13 at 8.) . . . **Der Rosenkavalier,** with Mechthild Gessendorf, Anne Sofie von Otter, Heidi Grant Murphy, Stanford Olsen, Gottfried Hornik, and Eric Halfvarson; James Levine. (March 10 at 7:30.) . . . **Simon Boccanegra,** with Aprile Millo, Plácido Domingo, Vladimir Chernov, and Roberto Scandiuzzi; Mr. Levine. (March 11 at 1:30.) . . . **Note:** On March 12 at 7, soprano June Anderson and tenor Luciano Pavarotti will perform a benefit concert of arias and duets, with Mr. Levine conducting the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chorus. (Metropolitan Opera House.)

New York City Opera—Madama Butterfly. (March 8 at 8.) . . . **Le nozze di Figaro.** (March 10 at 8 and March 12 at 1:30.) . . . **La Rondine.** (March 11 at 1:30.) . . . **Carmen.** (March 11 and March 14 at 8.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

American Chamber Opera Company—A quartet of devilish musical-theatre works, fully staged: William Albright's "Seven Deadly Sins," Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale," Douglas Anderson's "Faust Triumphant," and George

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Zarr's "Who's on Faust?" (Greenwich House, 27 Barrow St. March 10-11 at 8. For information about tickets, call 781-0857.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Valery Gergiev conducts Liadov's tone poems "The Enchanted Lake" and "From the Apocalypse," symphonic excerpts from Berlioz' "La Damnation de Faust," and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 6. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 9 and March 11 at 8; March 10 at 11 A.M.; and March 14 at 7:30.)

Warsaw Sinfonia—Krzysztof Penderecki leads his "Sinfonietta per Archi," in addition to Mendelssohn's "The Hebrides Overture," Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto No. 1 (with Allison Eldredge), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 4. (Carnegie Hall. March 8 at 8.)

LISTENING BOOTH

Othmar Schoeck: Orchesterlieder and Sommernacht; English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Howard Griffiths (Novalis). Schoeck (1886-1957) is revered in his native Switzerland and generally ignored elsewhere. The Swiss-born conductor Leon Botstein will make a case for Schoeck's Violin Concerto, with violinist Ani Kavafian, in the American Symphony Orchestra's annual "Unjust Obscurity" concert (at Avery Fisher Hall on March 10). The composer's greatest achievements, however, were in the art song, where his melodic gift, concentration of mood, sensitive text settings, and distinctive harmonic language (a Schreker-like mix of Wolf, Debussy, and early Schoenberg) proclaimed him an heir to the classic lieder tradition. Novalis's new release offers four song sets—two in Schoeck's instrumentation, two in masterful posthumous orchestrations of his piano accompaniments, by Rolf Urs Ringger. The Canadian baritone Nathan Berg, the disk's principal soloist, has a magnificent voice and uncanny interpretive abilities; his performance of these subtle masterworks should transport lieder lovers to a Swiss Nirvana.

Little Orchestra Society—Radio personality Robert Sherman and film critics Jeffrey Lyons and Michael Medved provide a running commentary for a concert of selections from film scores by Virgil Thomson ("The Plow That Broke the Plains"), Erich Wolfgang Korngold ("The Sea Hawk"), Bernard Herrmann ("Citizen Kane"), Max Steiner ("Now Voyager"), Franz Waxman ("Sunset Boulevard"), Fumio Hayasaka ("Rashomon"), John Williams ("Schindler's List"), Jerome Moross ("The Big Country"), Nino Rota ("8½"), Silvestre Revueltas ("Night of the Mayas"), and Saint-Saëns (the 1908 "L'Assassinat du Duc de Guise"); featuring soprano Angelina Réaux and clarinettist Giora Feidman, with Dino Anagnost on the podium. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. March 9 at 7.)

Oratorio Society of New York—Performing Orff's "Carmina Burana" and Mendelssohn's "Die Erste Walpurgisnacht." Lyndon Woodside directs. (Carnegie Hall. March 9 at 8.)

American Symphony Orchestra—Leon Botstein conducts works that he feels are unjustly underperformed: Sessions' Piano Concerto (featuring Robert Taub), Othmar Schoeck's Violin Concerto (with Ani Kavafian), Mendelssohn's double-chorus setting of Psalm 114, and Szymanowksi's Stabat Mater; with soprano Christine Goerke, mezzo-soprano Marietta Simpson, baritone Victor Ledbetter, and the Pro Arte Chorale. (Avery Fisher Hall. March 10 at 7:30.)

New York Pops—Skitch Henderson oversees light classics by Malcolm Arnold, MacDowell, Dukas, Leroy Anderson, and others, with Phyllis Newman providing a humorous commentary. Jeffrey Biegel will be featured in the New York première of Anderson's Piano Concerto. (Carnegie Hall. March 10 at 8.)

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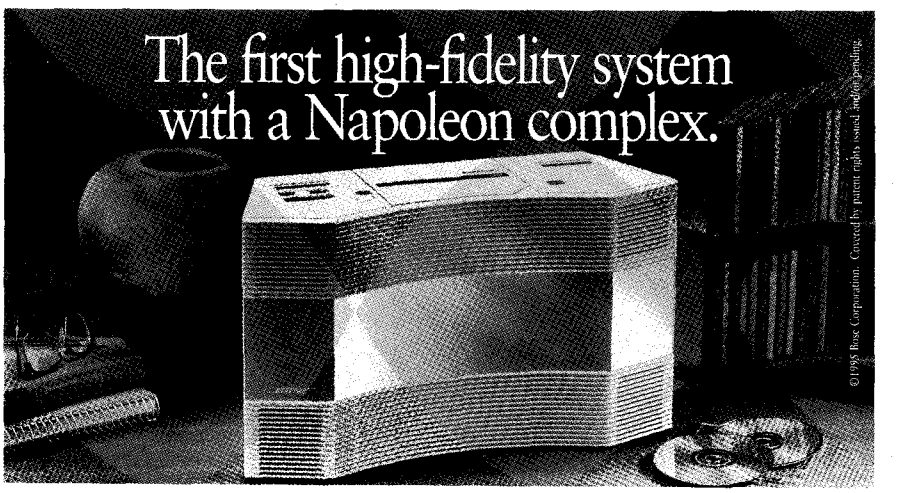

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CLASSICAL MUSIC–Cont'd

New York Choral Society—*John Daly Goodwin* directs the choir and an orchestra in Philip Glass's "Itaipu" and Vaughan Williams' Symphony No. 1 ("A Sea Symphony"). (Carnegie Hall. March 11 at 8.)

New York Chamber Symphony—Performing John Harbison's Concerto for Chamber Orchestra, Mendelssohn's E-Minor Violin Concerto (with Elmar Oliveira), and Schumann's Symphony No. 3. Gerard Schwarz conducts. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 11 at 8 and March 12 at 3.)

American Composers Orchestra—Presenting the première of Leo Kraft's "Symphony in One Movement," as well as Adolphus Hailstork's "Epitaph (In Memoriam Martin Luther King, Jr.)," David Sampson's "Triptych" (with trumpeter Raymond Mase), and John Corigliano's "Poem on His Birthday" (featuring baritone William Stone and the Morgan State University Choir); conducted by Paul Lustig Dunkel. (Carnegie Hall. March 12 at 3.)

Leon Botstein, conducting the American Symphony Orchestra.

Musica Viva—Jean-Louis Petit directs the chorus and orchestra in the première of his "Les Vêpres de Jeanne II," as well as Duruflé's Requiem and Poulenc's Organ Concerto (featuring Walter Klauss). (All Souls Unitarian Church, Lexington Ave. at 80th St. 535-5530. March 12 at 7.)

Jupiter Symphony—Lilian Kallir is the soloist in Mozart's C-Major Piano Concerto (K. 467). The program also includes Handel's D-Major Concerto Grosso (Op. 6, No. 5), Haydn's Symphony No. 70, and Moszkowski's Serenade, all conducted by Jens Nygaard. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. March 13 at 2 and 7 and March 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 799-1259.)

RECITALS

Four Nations Ensemble—The period-instrument ensemble offers music inspired by nocturnal themes, including works by Vivaldi, Purcell, Biber, Couperin, and Schoenberg (his "Verklärte Nacht," with the members of the Artaria String Quartet filling out the string texture). Sopranos Dana Hanchard and Carol Wilson, tenor Paul Elliott, and baritone Peter Becker are featured in the Baroque portion of the program. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 8 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Violinist Carmit Zori and pianist Edward Auer perform Prokofiev's D-Major Violin Sonata; cellist Peter Wyrick joins them for piano trios by Mozart (in G Major, K. 564) and Schumann (in D Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. March 9 at 7:30 and March 12 at 4.)

New York Festival of Song—Presenting mezzo-soprano Bernarda Fink and baritone Christopher Trakas in a program of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art songs from Argentina and Brazil; with pianist Steven Blier. (Weill Recital Hall. March 9 at 8.)

Juilliard String Quartet—The foursome plays Haydn's final, incomplete quartet (Op. 103); violist Walter Trampler assists in Brahms' two string quintets. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. March 9 at 8.)

Gustav Leonhardt—The eminent Dutch harpsichordist pays a rare visit to New York, performing Bach's E-Minor Suite ("Für das Lautenwerk"), a set of musical portraits by Antoine Forqueray, Louis Couperin's "Prélude à l'imitation de Froberger," several works by Johann Jakob Froberger (including his "Lamentation sur la mort de Ferdinand III"), and suites and toccatas by Matthias Weckmann. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. 921-2939. March 10 at 8.)

David Soyer and Seymour Lipkin—The cellist and the pianist perform sonatas by Beethoven (his First), Martinů, and Brahms (his First). (Weill Recital Hall. March 10 at 8.)

Flute Fair—On March 11, from 9 to 5:30, the New York Flute Club sponsors a convocation that boasts flute-oriented exhibits, master classes, workshops, open readings, and concerts. At 6, flutist Paula Robison is joined by pianist Samuel Sanders in a recital of music by Bach, Roussel, Grieg, Philippe Gaubert, and Joachim Andersen. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. For information, call 757-8339.)

Guarneri Quartet—A recital of string quartets by Janáček (his First) and Dvořák (in F Major, Op. 96), as well as Mozart's G-Minor String Quintet (with violist Kim Kashkashian). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. March 11 at 8.)

Indiana University New Music Ensemble—In a performance of Ligeti's Kammerkonzert, Birtwistle's "Carmen Arcadiae Mechanicae Perpetuum," and works by Frederick Fox and Petros Ovsepyan. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 11 at 8.)

Don Hulbert—Flutist, performing Bach's Second "Brandenburg" Concerto and B-Minor Orchestral Suite (with numerous colleagues assisting), as well as smaller-scale chamber works by Poulenc, Ginastera, Frank Martin, and Lee Gannon. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. March 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Ensemble Wien—The group performs Viennese bonbons by Mozart, Schubert, and two Strausses (Johann, Jr., and his brother Eduard). (Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. March 12 at 11 A.M. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing Mozart's D-Major Flute Quartet, Hindemith's song cycle "Die Junge Magd" (featuring mezzo-soprano Katherine Ciesinski), and Tchaikovsky's String Sextet ("Souvenir de Florence"). (Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway. March 12 at 2. For information about tickets, call 212-840-7470. . . . ¶ Weill Recital Hall. March 14 at 8.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra play Charles-Martin Loeffler's Deux Rhapsodies (for oboe, viola, and piano); Debussy's Sonata for Flute, Viola, and Harp; Jean Françaix's Divertissement; and Lalo's Piano Trio No. 1. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. March 12 at 3.)

Pomerium—The men's vocal ensemble sings motets and Mass movements by Dufay. (The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park. 923-2819. March 12 at 3.)

Locke Consort—Performing a mostly English Baroque program on period stringed instruments. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. March 12 at 5.)

Bridgehampton Chamber Music—Noted chamber-music players offer Bruce MacCombie's "Greeting—Sixty Bars for Krzysztof" (composed in honor of Krzysztof Penderecki), Ludwig Thuille's Sextet for Piano and Winds, Mozart's Quintet for Piano and Winds, and Mendelssohn's C-Minor Piano Trio. (Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St. 750-5776. March 12 at 5 and March 13 at 7:30.)

Zvi Plesser and Ilan Rechtman—The cellist and the pianist perform Brahms' E-Minor Cello Sonata and works by Schumann. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. March 12 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Peggy Pearson—In her New York début recital, the oboist is joined by soprano Dawn Upshaw and the Greenleaf Chamber Players in a program that includes Bach's E-Minor Trio Sonata, A-Major Concerto for Oboe d'Amore, and Cantata No. 84, as well as the premières of works by John Harbison (his "Chorale Cantata"), Elizabeth Brown, and Martin Brody. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. March 12 at 8.)

Yuri Bashmet—Violist, in a suite by Marin Marais and sonatas by Schubert (the "Arpeggione") and Shostakovich; with pianist Mikhail Muntian. (Carnegie Hall. March 14 at 8.)

FOR KIDS

(Accompanied by parents or other adults.)

"Roller-Skates, Dances, and Tales"—Choreographer Neta Pulvermacher solos on red roller skates and narrates while a septet skates to Mozart. She also presents "She Must Be Seeing Things," to the music of John Zorn, and excerpts from two full-length works, the klezmer-grunge "Goodbye and Good Luck" and "Five Beds / Children of the Dream," an evocation of her childhood on Kibbutz Lehavot-Habashan, Israel. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. March 11 at 3.)

"Jekyll and Hyde"—Chemistry nerd Henry Meckler invents an elixir he calls More, tries some, and turns into a supposedly cool guy, in Theatreworks/USA's rock allegory of substance abuse. (Promenade Theatre, Broadway at 76th St. 677-5959. March 11 at 12:30, and March 12 at 10:30 and 12:30.)

Maple-Sugar Sunday—As the sap rises, kids can take walks in the forest, sample maple-sugar candy, chart weather conditions and tree sizes, and listen to Tchin, a Native American storyteller, who will be accompanying his traditional Northeastern tales with tree-tapping flute music. (New York Botanical Garden, Bronx Park. 1-718 817-8700. March 12 at 1.)

Professor Putter—The magician in the guise of an inventor will demonstrate his brand of road-show science from his "gadgetorium" suitcase. (West Side Kids Theatre, Lincoln Square Synagogue, Amsterdam Ave. at 69th St. March 12 at 2. For information about tickets, call 877-6115.)

"Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Magic Show"—Magician-in-a-prince-costume Arnie Kolodner sings, conjures rabbits, and levitates a child from the audience. (West End Gate

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Children's Theatre, Broadway at 113th St. 662-8830. March 11 at 1:30.)

Music from China—The group plays selections from a traditional repertoire of zither, pipa, fiddle, and hammer-dulcimer songs and performs excerpts from the Cantonese opera "The Jade Bracelet." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. March 12 at 3.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

In Memory of Anne Frank—To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the German girl's death at Bergen-Belsen, in March 1945, one month before the camp was liberated, the Anne Frank Center USA and the PEN American Center, among others, will present a reading from the new, expanded translation of her diary. The selections to be read (by Amy Bloom, Mary Beth Hurt, Martha Plimpton, Claudia Shear, Gay Talese, and Roberta Wallach, among others) include entries Frank's father cut from the original 1955 edition. Schoolchildren who attend the commemorative performance will be given blank diaries. (Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, Second Ave. at 55th St. March 9 at 12:30. No tickets necessary.)

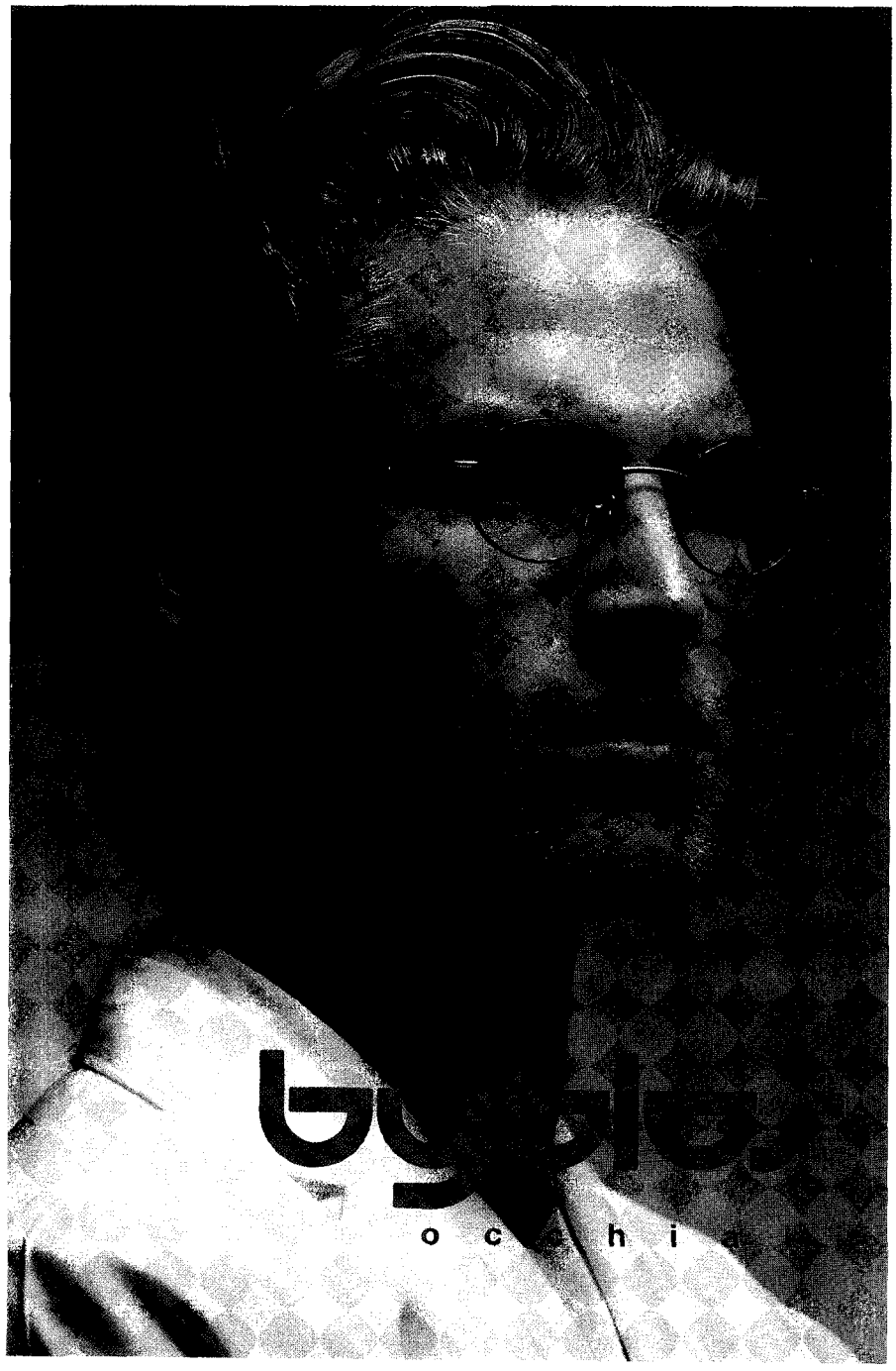
Women's History Month—A selection of events around the city. March 8 at 7: In a talk titled "The Hidden Dorothy Parker," writer Annette T. Rubinstein recalls her colleague's political activism during the Spanish Civil War and throughout the McCarthy era. (Brecht Forum, 122 W. 27th St. 242-4201.) . . . ¶ March 9 at 8:15: Nadine Strossen, the president of the A.C.L.U., debates Kathleen Mahoney, a law professor at the University of Calgary, on the topic "Pornography and Hate Speech." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ March 9-10, from 10 to 10: The New School presents a colloquium on women and music, with lectures and a broad range of concerts, from medieval chant to contemporary music. (66 W. 12th St. 229-5689.) . . . ¶ March 11 at 1: Urban Explorations searches the Greenwich Village area for the onetime haunts of women artists, writers, and activists. (For more information, call 1-718 721-5254.)

Park Lope—In the New York Road Runners Club Brooklyn Half Marathon, runners circle Prospect Park four times on the Park Drive loop, beginning at 9 A.M. on March 12. The 13.1-mile race is the first leg in a Grand Prix series of five half marathons (one in each borough) between now and September. Bagels and hot chocolate are free for those who get up early to do this sort of thing. (For more information about registration, call 860-4455.)

Readings—March 9 at 8: Henri Cole reads from his new collection of poems, "The Look of Things." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 11 at 7:30: A reading from the work of Jack Kerouac, on the King of the Beats' seventy-third birthday. Readers who call ahead may reserve the passages they would like to read. (Beatrix Books & Pix, 33-18 Broadway, Astoria, Queens. To select a passage, call 1-718 204-5775.) . . . ¶ March 12 at 6:30: Mark Kriegel reads from his novel "Bless Me, Father." Boxing trainer Teddy Atlas, the model for the novel's central character, will be on hand to discuss what it feels like to be a fictional character. (KGB, 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 13 at 12:30: Thomas Cahill explains the understated premise of his book "How the Irish Saved Civilization." (Barnes & Noble, Third Ave. at 54th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 13 at 7:30: For the hundredth anniversary of Oscar Wilde's trial, Malcolm McDowell reads portions of Wilde's testimony and excerpts from Wilde's writings, including his prison epistle "De Profundis." The poet and critic Richard Howard reads the denunciations that came from Wilde's Victorian opposition. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ March 14 at 8: An informal reading of Alice Lee's screenplay "The Legend of Pig-Eye." (Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 E. 3rd St. 674-3778.)

Talks—March 9 at 6:30: Ronald McNeil, a Lakota Sioux, discusses the legacy of his great-great-great-grandfather, in "The Search for Sitting Bull." (Great Hall, Cooper Union, Third Ave. at 7th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.) . . . ¶ March 11 at 2: Historian Sherrill Wilson presents the latest archeological findings from the African burial ground at what is now Foley Square, in the City Hall area. (Hamilton Grange Library, 503 W. 145th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 13 at 6: To kick off CUNY's conference on dance writing, Poets House screens "Parallel Lines: Poetry and Dance," a record of last June's meeting of poets Michael Palmer and Jackson Mac Low, dance critic Jack Anderson, and performers Kenneth King, Anne Tardos, and Clarinda Mac Low. (Judson Memorial Church, 55 Washington Sq. S. Tickets at the door on the night of the screening.) . . . ¶ March 13 at 6:30: Lorraine Brown and Kathy Perkins chronicle the contributions of designers and technicians in the thirties to the Negro Units of the Federal Theatre Project, in conjunction with the exhibition "Onstage: A Century of African-American Stage Design." (New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ March 13 at 6:30: Photojournalist Steffen Landauer presents slides taken during his Central Asian train travels—Silk Road oases, Kyrgyzstan mountains, and Mongolian deserts. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. For information about tickets, call the Institute for Asian Studies at 338-0159.)

Walks—¶ March 11 at 1: Citywalks takes in the tree-lined older streets of the West Village. For information, call 989-2456. . . . ¶ March 12 at 1: Radical Walking Tours visits the Lower East Side retreats of radical Jews. The tour begins at Seward Park, across from the former site of the *Jewish Daily Forward*, at 175 East Broadway. For information, call 1-718 492-0069.



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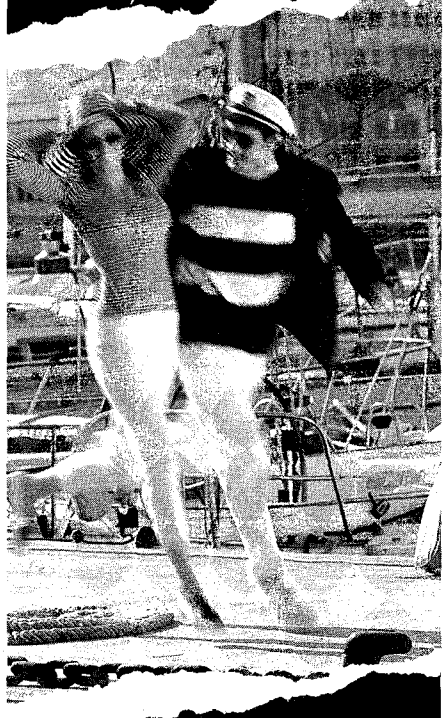

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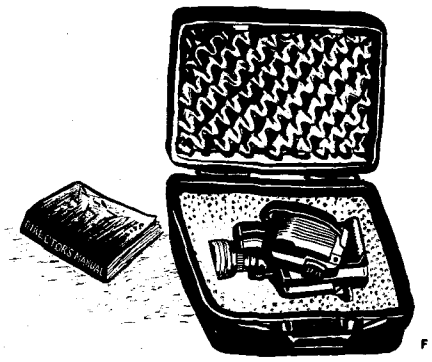

THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

I Am Cuba—The Georgian director Mikhail Kalatozov's 1964 portrait of the island nation during the Batista era was a landmark of Soviet-Cuban coöperation. It features a cast of peasants, students, and intellectuals, as well as professional actors. Two poets, Yevgeny Yevtushenko and Enrique Pineda Barnet, wrote the screenplay. In Spanish, Russian, and English. Opening March 8. (Film Forum.)

Muriel's Wedding—An Australian comedy, written and directed by P. J. Hogan, about a young woman from the suburbs (Toni Collette) who moves to Sydney to find a husband. With Rachel Griffiths and Bill Hunter. Opening March 10. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Beekman, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Outbreak—Wolfgang Petersen ("Das Boot," "In the Line of Fire") directed this thriller, in which Dustin Hoffman and Rene Russo are doctors out to rescue a small California town—and the rest of the world—from a lethal virus. With Morgan Freeman and Donald Sutherland. Written by Laurence Dworet, Robert Roy Pool, Ted Tally, and Neal Jimenez, from a story by Dworet and Pool. Opening March 10. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Son of the Shark—In French writer-director Agnès Merlet's first feature, two homeless teen-age brothers (Ludovic Vandendaele and Erick Da Silva) wreak havoc on a small town on the northern coast. With Sandrine Blancke. In French. Opening March 10. (Village East Cinemas and Angelika 57.)

The Sum of Us—David Stevens has adapted his play, about an Australian widower (Jack Thompson) and his gay son (Russell Crowe), for the screen. With John Polson and Deborah Kennedy. Directed by Kevin Dowling (who also directed the 1990 Off Broadway production) and Geoff Burton. Opening March 8. (Village Theatre VII and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Whitney Balliett, Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 30.)

Before Sunrise—Richard Linklater's third movie is provocatively plotless. Jesse (Ethan Hawke) and Céline (Julie Delpy) meet on a train, decide to get off together, and have themselves a fine, sleepless time before parting the next day. That's it: various threats loom up and fade away, and the only suspense comes from wondering whether the two characters (who are pretty much the only characters) will stop talking long enough to have sex. The charm—the midsummer enchantment—never feels forced; it steals up and wins you. A true romance.—A.L. (1/30/94) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square.)

Before the Rain—A drama set in Macedonia and London, about three sets of characters who seem to lead unrelated lives but who discover the opposite. Written and directed by Milcho Manchevski. In Macedonian and English. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Brady Bunch Movie—There's a cardboard plot involving Michael McKean as an evil real-estate developer, but really this is a relaxed, hit-or-miss eighty-nine-minute skit. Gary Cole stands out as A Man Named Brady, a sweet optimist forever dispensing officious advice and nonsensical proverbs, but the three daughters—Christine Taylor as perfect, bitchy Marcia (updated with a lesbian admirer), Olivia Hack as lisping Cindy, and Jennifer Elise Cox as tortured Jan, the poster girl of adolescent neurosis—steal the show. Shelley Long, the most inevitable casting choice of the year, has surprisingly little to do as Carol. Directed by Betty Thomas.—S.K. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Bullets Over Broadway—A nicely structured piece of silliness from Woody Allen, set in the theatre world of the nineteen-twenties. John Cusack is the Woody substitute, an earnest young playwright who needs to discover an existence beyond the stage; Chazz Palminteri shines as the taciturn gangster who swaps places with him, becoming as ruthless in his aesthetics as he is with a gun. Around this neat switch Allen assembles a crowd of near-caricatures—opportunities for Dianne Wiest, Jim Broadbent, Jennifer Tilly, and others to show their stuff.—A.L. (10/24/94) (34th St. East, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, and Waverly. . . . ¶ Beekman; through March 9.)

Exotica—The Canadian writer-director Atom Egoyan's drama about the complicated lives of the patrons and employees of a strip club. With Bruce Greenwood, Mia Kirshner, Don McKellar, and Elias Koteas. (Angelika Film Center.)

Forrest Gump—As all the world now knows, Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, a simple Alabama soul who serves his country without hurting a fly; he saves his comrades in Vietnam, woos the dippy Jenny (Robin Wright), and runs back and forth across the continent. Hanks does his best to convince us that Gump is, in fact, a character and not merely a bulging sack of virtues, but the movie takes the fight out of him. With Sally Field and Gary Sinise. Directed by Robert Zemeckis.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Gemini, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Columbus Circle.)

A Great Day in Harlem—A funny, moving, altogether miraculous documentary about how fifty-eight famous, near-famous, and not yet famous jazz musicians came to be photographed by Art Kane for *Esquire* in front of a brownstone on East 126th Street one morning in August of 1958. The movie, just under an hour long, is a mercurial mix of brief interviews with Kane (who died in February) and with musicians and bystanders who were at the shoot (only a dozen or so survive); alternate exposures (Kane took a hundred and twenty); various stills; an 8-mm. movie taken by Milt Hinton's wife, Mona; and sequences from the brilliant "Sound of Jazz" television special, which had aired just six months earlier and included many of the same musicians. On the same bill is Gjon Mili's classic—and pardonably arty—1944 jazz short, "Jammin' the Blues."—W.B. (Reviewed in the Jazz column, 1/23/95.) (Quad Cinema.)

Hideaway—A man resuscitated from drowning (Jeff Goldblum) finds that his near-death experience has created a psychic link with a killer (Jeremy Sisto) who is after his wife (Christine Lahti) and daughter (Alicia Silverstone). With Alfred Molina. Directed by Brett Leonard. Written by Andrew Kevin Walker and Neal Jimenez, from Dean R. Koontz's 1992 novel. (Movieland 8th Street

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Triplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Hoop Dreams—An engrossing documentary about two inner-city Chicago teen-agers, William Gates and Arthur Agee, who aspire to careers in professional basketball. The filmmakers—Steve James, Frederick Marx, and Peter Gilbert—follow them all the way through high school. In the course of the movie's patient, sympathetic narrative (the running time is close to three hours), our reaction to the heroes' progress changes decisively, and for the better: at first we're assessing their chances, measuring them for N.B.A. uniforms; by the end we're rooting for them simply to survive the process without losing all their exuberance and drive and creative spirit.—T.R. (10/17/94) (Baronet, Quad Cinema, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

The Hunted—Christopher Lambert is a businessman in Japan who finds himself pursued by an assassin (John Lone) after he witnesses the murder of a young woman (Joan Chen). Written and directed by Jonathan Lawton. (Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, Olympia, and National Twin.)

Just Cause—Sean Connery is an icy Harvard law professor and capital-punishment opponent drafted to spring Blair Underwood from death row, and Laurence Fishburne is the corrupt small-town policeman in his way. Two or three times, the actors trick you into thinking that this thriller means to grapple with white liberal guilt, but the director, Arne Glimcher, quickly chucks the dilemma they've set up. The replacement: a ridiculous racist revenge plot climaxing in an alligator-ridden swamp in the Everglades. Among the many garish stereotypes here is Ed Harris, in a cheeseball performance as a white-trash Hannibal Lecter. Screenplay by Jeb Stuart and Peter Stone, based on the novel by John Katzenbach.—S.K. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Gemini, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Criterion Center.)

Romane Bohringer and Elsa Zylberstein in "Mina Tannenbaum."

FAYE JONES

The KKK Boutique Ain't Just Rednecks—An experimental documentary about racism, modelled on Dante's "Inferno." Co-written and co-directed by Camille Billops (who is the movie's Virgil) and James V. Hatch. With appearances by Ollie Harrington, Delilah Jackson, and George C. Wolfe. (Little Theatre; through March 14.)

Legends of the Fall—Edward Zwick's film, based on Jim Harrison's brawny novella, is a father-and-sons saga, in which three handsome brothers (Brad Pitt, Aidan Quinn, Henry Thomas) compete for the approval of a stern patriarch (Anthony Hopkins). It gets sillier as it goes. Halfway through, Pa suffers a stroke, and Hopkins' performance turns into a mad music-hall impersonation of a peg-leg pirate. His outrageous scenery-chewing reveals the movie's true nature: it's the Monty Python version of "Bonanza." Also with Julia Ormond.—T.R. (1/9/95) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Ziegfeld, and Lincoln Square.)

Little Women—Gillian Armstrong's movie is more naturalistic—less storybooklike—than the previous screen versions of Louisa May Alcott's novel about a poor but noble New England family in the eighteen-sixties. In this rendering, the Marches—mother, father (mostly absent), and four daughters—inhabit a coherent, fully realized world. Winona Ryder, as the aspiring writer Jo, gives a luminous performance.—T.R. (1/9/95) (Chelsea Cinemas and Cinema 3.)

The Madness of King George—Alan Bennett's stage play has moved to the screen, with the same star (Nigel Hawthorne), the same director (Nicholas Hytner), and the same story, about the King of England's decline, in the years 1788-89, from cheerful disciplinarian to lewd, unsleeping ranter. It's a fine dramatic predicament—and that's how it stays, never really pressing forward or pulling us into a plot. But there is plenty of relish here—in Ian Holm's fierce turn as a country physician, and in Hawthorne's blend of thundering and whimpers. With Helen Mirren (underused) and Rupert Everett (overweight).—A.L. (1/16/94) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, Coronet, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Mangler—A horror movie about malevolent commercial laundry equipment, starring Robert Englund (Freddy Krueger in the "Nightmare on Elm Street" series). Directed by Tobe Hooper; screenplay by Hooper, Stephen Brooks, and Peter Welbeck, from a short story by Stephen King. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Gotham Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Man of the House—A comedy in which Chevy Chase's advances toward Farrah Fawcett are thwarted by her eleven-year-old son (Jonathan Taylor Thomas). Directed by James Orr, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jim Cruickshank from a story by David Peckinpah and Richard Jeffries. (Village Theatre VII, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

Mina Tannenbaum—Writer-director Martine Dugowson's feature follows a quarter-century-long friendship between two Jewish women (Romane Bohringer and Elsa Zylberstein) in Paris. With Florence Thomassin. In French. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Nobody's Fool—Paul Newman plays Sully, a divorced, erratically employed construction worker in a dingy upstate New York town. Robert Benton's movie (based on a novel by Richard Russo) is essentially a series of low-key comic vignettes in which the hero tries to deal with the exasperating presence of other people: irritable neighbors, demanding friends, disappointed family members. Not much happens, but the picture bobs along amiably to the rhythm of Newman's dry, deeply funny performance,

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MOSCHINO

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CURRENT FILMS–Cont'd

and the tiny pleasures accumulate like the snow that covers the town. The terrific supporting cast includes Bruce Willis, Melanie Griffith, Jessica Tandy, and Gene Saks.—T.R. (34th Street Showplace, Tower East, 23rd St. West Triplex, Lincoln Square, and Olympia.)

Once Were Warriors—A fictional account of a Maori family in present-day New Zealand. Directed by Lee Tamahori. Written by Riwia Brown, from Alan Duff's 1990 novel. (Angelika Film Center and Paris.)

Pulp Fiction—In Quentin Tarantino's celebrated picture, John Travolta, Samuel L. Jackson, Uma Thurman, Tim Roth, Harvey Keitel, Christopher Walken, and Bruce Willis parade through two and a half hours of complicated, cross-weaving Los Angeles plots, some of which are more gripping than others; the talk is dirty and funny, the violence always waiting just around the corner. It's a bright and startling picture, but the next day, it seems like a dream: the film attacks your senses and gives you almost nothing to remember it by, let alone to nourish you.—A.L. (10/10/94) (Village East Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 57th Street Playhouse, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

The Quick and the Dead—Sharon Stone dons leather pants and packs a six-gun in a Western directed by Sam Raimi. With Gene Hackman, Russell Crowe, and Leonardo DiCaprio. Written by Simon Moore. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex and National Twin.)

Quiz Show—Robert Redford's movie is a speedy, absorbing chronicle of a trivial show-business scandal of the fifties: the rigging of big-money quiz shows. The screenplay, by Paul Attanasio, tries hard to sell some sweeping ideas about the class dynamics of American society, and doesn't quite succeed. The picture's real strength is its witty, vigorous evocation of the fifties media world. It hums along like a well-constructed farce, and its crazy momentum carries it over the bumps of social significance. Ralph Fiennes, John Turturro, and Rob Morrow have the largest roles, but they're outshone by the supporting players: Paul Scofield, Mira Sorvino, Christopher McDonald, Allan Rich, Hank Azaria, Barry Levinson, and—best of all—David Paymer.—T.R. (9/19/94) (Village East Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Lincoln Square.)

Red—The last and best film in the trilogy that began with the baffling "Blue" and continued with the more acrid "White"; here all the skills of the director, Krzysztof Kieślowski, are brought into melancholy play. Blind chance or benign fate (according to your point of view) brings Valentine (Irène Jacob), a young model living alone in Geneva, into contact with a retired judge (Jean-Louis Trintignant) with a predilection for eavesdropping on telephone conversations. In time Valentine's repulsion shades into curiosity, and from there into affection. And the movie itself shades from coldness and contrivance into a story as touching and mysterious as anything Kieślowski has ever made. In French.—A.L. (11/28/94) (68th St. Playhouse, Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Roommates—Peter Falk plays an old man living with the grandson he raised (D. B. Sweeney), who is now a married doctor with a family. With Julianne Moore and Ellen Burstyn. Directed by Peter Yates. Written by Max Apple and Stephen Metcalfe, from Apple's 1994 memoir. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Orpheum VII, Guild, and Lincoln Square.)

Sankofa—A model (Oyafunmike Ogunlano) on a photo shoot in West Africa is hurled back in time to the era of slavery, in a film written and directed by Haile Gerima. (Thalia.)

The Secret of Roan Inish—John Sayles' fable about a mythological Celtic creature, the Selkie (half seal, half human), and its effect on an Irish family unfolds as a tall tale, and it offers the pleasures of a magical story told in mysterious tones. The movie begins as a rousing sea adventure, then turns into a home-and-hearth mood piece; what saves it from being cloying is an almost total lack of drama. The rhythms are placid and the camera work (by Haskell Wexler) is simple and unfussy. The film's a charm.—B.D. (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Cinema, and Lincoln Square.)

Shallow Grave—Kerry Fox, Ewan McGregor, and Christopher Eccleston are three Edinburgh roommates confronted by the corpse of their new lodger and the stash of drug money that he has left behind. They bury the body and keep the cash; greed and paranoia soon kick in; and the plot, smartly worked out by screenwriter John Hodge, marches toward its climax. Not that you care too much how it ends up or what happens to these people—the film is less a thriller than a frosty exercise in logic. But the director, Danny Boyle, does wonders with a small budget, and the suave, dense-hued look of his movie stays with you long after the horror has evaporated.—A.L. (2/13/95) (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

The Shawshank Redemption—Tim Robbins returns to his best form with his haunted, cunning portrayal of Andy Dufresne, a young banker sentenced to life imprisonment in the nineteen-forties. Frank Darabont's movie never grabs at you, preferring to work patiently on your sympathies and nerves while finding time for casual jokes. What at first seems like a plotless tale of companionship—principally between Andy and a fixer named Red (Morgan Freeman)—tightens into excitement. The picture stays on track and leaves you, appropriately enough, with a surging sense of release.—A.L. (9/26/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Strawberry and Chocolate—The Cuban director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea charts the efforts of Diego (Jorge Perugorria), a gay artist, to seduce David (Vladimir Cruz), a straight and, frankly, rather boring student. It's a daring movie to have come out of Cuba, although Gutiérrez Alea's grasp of the radical temperament may seem unsophisticated to audiences here. Diego kicks out against government restrictions, David lives quietly within them; wouldn't it have been more intriguing the other way around? Co-directed by Juan Carlos Tabio. In Spanish.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Super 8 ½—A faux documentary shot in black-and-white 16 mm., written and directed by its star, Bruce La Bruce ("No Skin Off My Ass"), about an alcoholic ex-porn star with plans for a comeback. (Cinema Village.)

Tom and Viv—Willem Dafoe plays the young T. S. Eliot with a curious Boer accent and a look on his face that suggests he would be happier back in the jungles of "Platoon." As Vivienne, Eliot's distressed first wife, Miranda Richardson gives such an overloaded performance that the simple drinking of a cup of tea becomes unwatchable. (If Vivienne really did behave like this, no wonder Eliot was in despair.) The movie regards the poet as a chilly repressive who locked away first his feelings and then—by extension—his wife. Those who think that poetry is a waste product of neurosis will have a lovely time. Brian Gilbert directs, heavily; the screenplay is by Michael Hastings (who wrote the original play) and Adrian Hodges.—A.L. (12/12/94) (Cinema 3rd Avenue.)

Vanya on 42nd Street—Louis Malle's astonishingly beautiful film documents a stage production, directed by André Gregory, of Chekhov's "Uncle Vanya." The conceit is that the actors—wearing street clothes and clutching take-out coffee—have gathered for a run-through; as it goes along, our sense of the theatrical reality gives way to the more intimate feeling of belief that movies create. The style of the movie seems, finally, to merge with the play itself: nothing appears to be happening, yet everything is transformed. With Wallace Shawn, as Vanya, and Julianne Moore, as Yelena; also with Brooke Smith, Larry Pine, and George Gaynes. The superb adaptation is by David Mamet.—T.R. (10/31/94) (Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

The Walking Dead—Four African-American marines (Allen Payne, Eddie Griffin, Joe Morton, and Vonte Sweet) fight their way through the jungle during the Vietnam War, in an action film written and directed by Preston A. Whitmore II. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Window to Paris—Yuri Mamin's comic fantasy about St. Petersburg roommates (Serguei Dontsov and Victor Michailov) who discover a window in their apartment that opens onto the City of Light. Written by the director and Arkadi Tigai. In Russian and French. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THEATRE ADDRESSES

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (513-5408).
Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (513-5402).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st (247-5070).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th (336-5000).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Thalia, B'way at 95th (316-4962).
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia 1 and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

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REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Deadly Companions (1961)—In Sam Peckinpah's big-screen-directing début, Brian Keith (the star of Peckinpah's TV show "The Westerner") plays a former Union soldier who enlists a flashy gunslinger (Steve Cochran) and a Confederate psychopath (Chill Wills) to rob a bank with him. Instead they wind up escorting a dance-hall gal (Maureen O'Hara) on a prolonged and improbable funeral trek through Apache country. The plot twists are hokey, but the atmosphere is bleak and tense and the men's performances nuanced. Wills makes a terrific mangy villain; he sweats corruption through his buffalo-fur coat. His dream of starting his own slave kingdom is as unsettling as Peckinpah's vision of an inebriated Indian party that bobs madly across the horizon (a dazzling piece of staging). They both belong to the same nightmarish Western landscape as Cormac McCarthy's 1985 novel, "Blood Meridian." A. S. Fleischman wrote the script.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 10 and 12.)

The General (1926)—One of Buster Keaton's most celebrated comedies. It's a classic and many people swear by it, although it isn't funny in the freely inventive way of his "Steamboat Bill, Jr." (1927). Its humor is too drawn out for laughter. And yet it has a beauty; it has the shape of comedy. The time is the Civil War. Keaton plays a shy railroad engineer on a steam engine called The General. He also wrote the script and directed, in collaboration with Clyde Bruckman. The girl is Marion Mack. Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; March 11-13.)

It Came from Beneath the Sea (1955)—A giant not-quite-octopus (it has only six tentacles) crosses the Pacific and runs into the U.S. Navy. Designed by Ray Harryhausen, the creature has a slimy charm: its suction cups register visually as so many eyes and ears, so it seems to be eavesdropping when it sneaks up on unsuspecting sailors. And there's something disarmingly sexual about the way it caresses the Golden Gate Bridge—an encounter that generates more heat than submarine skipper Kenneth Tobey and marine biologist Faith Domergue do. Directed by Robert Gordon.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 11-12.)

Major Dundee (1964)—Sam Peckinpah's studio-mangled cavalry movie stars Charlton Heston as the Union commandant of a New Mexico prison garrison whose Rebel inmates, led by Richard Harris, help him defeat a rampaging Apache chief. It has the makings of a true Peckinpah epic—visual whoosh, romantic gestures, and scarred, oversized anti-heroes—but after the first hour or so, the narrative staggers, the action goes weirdly awry, and the characters lose their hard definition. Still, a determined Heston and a gallant, unpredictable Harris generate their own push-pull chemistry. The wily supporting cast includes James Coburn, Ben Johnson, Warren Oates, Slim Pickens, Brock Peters, and L. Q. Jones. Script by Harry Julian Fink, Oscar Saul, and Peckinpah; Sam Leavitt did the spectacular cinematography.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; March 14.)

Pork Chop Hill (1959)—A precise, harrowing re-creation of a Korean War tragedy: while negotiators hammer out the peace at Panmunjom, an American company led by Lt. Joe Clemons (Gregory Peck) tramps up a Chinese-controlled hill important only as a bargaining chip. The director, Lewis Milestone, failed to integrate the surge of battle and the sometimes hackneyed personal vignettes. They register as histrionic arias, but luckily some resourceful actors (Martin Landau, Rip Torn, Woody Strode, James Edwards, Harry Guardino, George Peppard, Harry Dean Stanton, and Robert Blake) put them across. Clemons' summary statement—

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CHANNEL SURFING

Gods and Demons

A SURVEY course in subversive noise, "The History of Rock 'n' Roll," the syndicated ten-part documentary that will air locally on WOR-Channel 9 beginning March 8 (there's also an uncensored home video version, offering naked hippie chicks), is a monumental paste job of old footage and new interviews. From kinescopes of Chuck Berry and Elvis to the mind-splat collages of MTV, the series doesn't miss a clip. There's Janis Joplin singing as if she had sore nipples, Jimi Hendrix shamanizing with his guitar, Jim Morrison staring off into inner space. Like soldiers recalling past campaigns, Keith Richards, David Bowie, Bruce Springsteen, Jerry Garcia, Chrissie Hynde, and Ozzy Osbourne, among others, describe those heady days when their limos were engulfed and the youthful masses seemed ready to upend society. But as ever, the music's supreme spokesman remains The Who's Pete Townshend, who chops through the celebratory air and, after a segment honoring those gonad gods of power chords, Led Zeppelin, comments, "I think they're all really, really great guys. Just never liked the band."

Aside from the Simpson trial, the biggest grabber on daytime TV lately has been the demonic story line on NBC's "Days of Our Lives," a psychedelic-mushroom freak-out that has made the show must-see camp. Evil has entered Deidre Hall's Marlena, transforming her into Marlena the Desecrater, a succubus with wolf-gray eyes and telekinetic powers. In one episode, the show's villain dispatched a row of Marlena the Desecrater clones to sow destruction—which meant that Deidre Hall was playing herself, her evil self, and a set of evil clones. Whatever NBC is paying her, it isn't enough.

John Goodman, out from under Roseanne's big thumb, has fun wearing vanilla-ice-cream suits and driving vintage jalopies as the populist Louisiana governor Huey P. Long, in TNT's "Kingfish" (March 19). The pace is plodding, but it's hard to move fast in all that humidity.

—JAMES WOLCOTT

REVIVALS–Cont'd

"The men who fought there know what they did and the meaning of it"—is pathetically insufficient to the carnage. James R. Webb wrote the fact-based script. Sam Leavitt was the cinematographer (he had a great decade and a half: see "Major Dundee," above).—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; March 10.)

THE RED PONY (1949)—John Steinbeck messes up his adaptation of his own wonderfully unsentimental story cycle about a boy (Peter Miles) on a California ranch: he overworks the antagonism between the young hero's parents (the morose Shepperd Strudwick and the miscast, purse-lipped Myrna Loy), and he struggles to keep his food-chain view of life (even before the credits, an owl dines on a rabbit) within the contours of an upbeat child-meets-horse movie. But it has its moments. Robert Mitchum shrewdly underplays a studly ranch hand, Billy Buck; Louis Calhern genially overplays the boy's grandfather, who can't stop reminiscing about the Western migration. And the director, Lewis Milestone, fashions some eloquent images from simple materials. Still, the action can't match the stunning fanfares in Aaron Copland's score. With Margaret Hamilton and a seven-year-old Beau Bridges.—M.S. (Museum of Modern Art; March 9 and 11.)

SHERLOCK JR. (1924)—The title of this Buster Keaton comedy doesn't do justice to what the movie is about: Keaton plays a projectionist who, while running a movie—"Hearts and Pearls"—enters the screen and becomes involved with the characters. Directed by Keaton, it's a wonderfully imaginative film, full of extraordinary tricks so immaculately executed that they look simple. It's a piece of native American Surrealism. With Kathryn McGuire as the heroine, and Keaton's father, Joe Keaton, as the heroine's father. Silent.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; March 11-13.)

THE WILD BUNCH (1969)—Sam Peckinpah's Western epic—perhaps the greatest American movie—is a brilliant, suspenseful action picture about a band of outlaws on the run in south Texas and Mexico in the days before the First World War. It has been restored to its full two-hour-and-twenty-five-minute length, and the restored scenes—mostly flashbacks to painful moments in the life of the gang's leader, Pike Bishop (William Holden)—deepen and complicate the viewer's responses to the film's violent set pieces. The voluptuous carnage in the opening shoot-out and in the climactic massacre is more disturbing than ever, because it's now tinged with the melancholy of an aging killer. The complete film makes clear that this was always meant to be Pike's story: a portrait of a Western survivor who becomes, in the end, an artist of death. The superb supporting cast includes Robert Ryan, Ernest Borgnine, Ben Johnson, Warren Oates, Jaime Sanchez, Edmond O'Brien, and Emilio Fernandez. The screenplay is by Peckinpah and Walon Green. The editing, by Lou Lombardo, and the cinematography, by Lucien Ballard, are extraordinary.—T.R. (3/6/95) (Lincoln Square.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

WORLDWIDE CINEMAS, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves. (246-1583)—"Junior" (Ivan Reitman). . . . "Interview with the Vampire" (Neil Jordan). . . . "Speechless" (Ron Underwood). . . . "Death and the Maiden" (Roman Polanski). . . . "Safe Passage" (Robert Allan Ackerman). . . . "Nell" (Michael Apted).

FILM FORUM 2 AND 3, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—**THEATRE 2:** A festival of Buster Keaton films, an early celebration of his hundredth birthday (the actual date is October 4). March 8: "Speak Easily" (1932, Edward Sedgwick) and four short films with Keaton and Roscoe (Fatty) Arbuckle. . . . March 9-10: "Go West" (1925, Keaton) and three short films—"The Balloonatic" (1923), "The Paleface" (1921), and "The Blacksmith" (1922). . . . March 11-13: "The General" (†) and "Sherlock Jr." (†). . . . March 14: "The Railrodder" (1965, Keaton), "Buster Keaton Rides Again" (1965), a documentary, and "What! No Beer?" (1933, Sedgwick). . . . **THEATRE 3:** "Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!" (1965, Russ Meyer) and "Mamma Roma" (1962, Pier Paolo Pasolini, in Italian).

LITTLE THEATRE, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-1717)—Through March 14: "The KKK Boutique Ain't Just Rednecks" (Camille Billops and James V. Hatch).

At Film Forum 2, Buster Keaton in "Sherlock Jr."

EDWARD SOREL

CINEMA VILLAGE, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—"Super 8 ½" (Bruce La Bruce).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—The museum will be showing three of the five films nominated for Academy Awards in the foreign-picture category, on March 9 at 2:30, 6, and 8. . . . ¶ A series of films directed by Lewis Milestone. March 9 at 6 and March 11 at 5: "The Red Pony" (†). . . . March 10 at 2:30: "Pork Chop Hill" (†). . . . March 10 at 6 and March 13 at 2:30: "The Purple Heart" (1944), with Dana Andrews and Farley Granger. . . . March 11 at 3: "Of Mice and Men" (1939), with Lon Chaney, Jr., and Burgess Meredith. . . . March 12 at 2 and March 13 at

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6: "All Quiet on the Western Front" (1930), with Lew Ayres. . . . March 12 at 5 and March 14 at 2:30: "The North Star" (1943), with Anne Baxter, Andrews, and Walter Huston. . . . March 14 at 6: "A Walk in the Sun" (1945), with Andrews. . . . ¶ "The Men Who Made the Movies," the 1973 series that critic Richard Schickel produced and directed for the Educational Broadcasting Corporation, in which Schickel interviewed eight directors. The museum will show seven of these. On March 10 at 6, an interview with Frank Capra. . . . March 10 at 8, an interview with Raoul Walsh. . . . March 11 at 1, an interview with George Cukor. . . . March 11 at 5, an interview with Howard Hawks. . . . March 12 at 1, an interview with Vincente Minnelli. . . . March 12 at 3, an interview with Alfred Hitchcock. . . . March 12 at 5, an interview with King Vidor. . . . ¶ March 11 at 3: "Nell Gwynne" (1926, Herbert Wilcox), with Dorothy Gish.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A program of recent French films selected by the editors and critics of *Cahiers du Cinéma*. March 8 at 2: "Portrait of a Young Girl" (1994, Chantal Akerman) and "U.S. Go Home" (1994, Claire Denis). . . . March 8 at 4:30: "Travolta and Me" (1993, Patricia Mazuy). . . . March 9 at 2 and 6:30: "The Innocents" (1988, André Téchiné). . . . March 9 at 4 and 8:15: "I Don't Kiss" (1992, Téchiné). . . . ¶ A retrospective of the television and film works of Sam Peckinpah. March 10 at 2 and March 12 at 3:45 and 7:30: "The Deadly Companions" (†). . . . March 10 at 3:45 and 7:45, March 11 at 6, and March 12 at 5:40 and 9:15: "Ride the High Country" (1962), with Joel McCrea and Randolph Scott. . . . March 10 at 5:30 and March 11 at 3:45 and 7:45: "Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid" (1973), with James Coburn and Kris Kristofferson. . . . March 14 at 2 and 6:30: Episodes of the television series "The Rifleman" and "The Marshall.". . . March 14 at 4 and 8:20: "Major Dundee" (†). . . . ¶ March 11-12 at 2: "It Came from Beneath the Sea" (†).

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through March 19: "Barbra Streisand: One Voice" (1986). (Showings Tuesdays through Sundays at 2.)

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—A program of films by Atom Egoyan. March 11 at 2: "Family Viewing" (1987). . . . March 11 at 4:30: "Next of Kin" (1984). . . . March 12 at 2: "Speaking Parts" (1989). Mr. Egoyan will be present. . . . March 12 at 4: "Exotica" (1994). Mr. Egoyan will be present.

Donnell Library Center, 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619)—March 9 at 2:30: "Salesman" (1969, Albert and David Maysles and Charlotte Zwerin). . . . ¶ March 14 at noon: "Bye Bye Birdie" (1963, George Sidney), with Janet Leigh, Dick Van Dyke, and Ann-Margret.

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On March 12 at 7, the feature will be George Cukor's "Sylvia Scarlett" (1936), with Katharine Hepburn and Cary Grant.

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—March 14 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Love After Love" (1991, Diane Kurys; in French), with Isabelle Huppert.

Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway (1-718 638-5000)—A program of new Italian films. March 10 at 7: "Manila Paloma Blanca" (1993, Daniele Segre) and "Dinamite—Nuraxi Figus, Italia" (1994, Segre).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—March 11 at 6: "The Gold Rush" (1925, Charlie Chaplin). . . . ¶ March 11-12 at 8: "Just Visiting This Planet" (1991, Peter Sempel). . . . ¶ March 11-12 at 10: "Dandy" (1988, Sempel). . . . ¶ March 12 at 4: Three films by Jean Cocteau—"The Blood of a Poet" (1930), "Orpheus" (1949), and "The Testament of Orpheus" (1960). . . . ¶ March 14 at 7, 8:30, and 10: "Crossroads" (1976, Bruce Conner).

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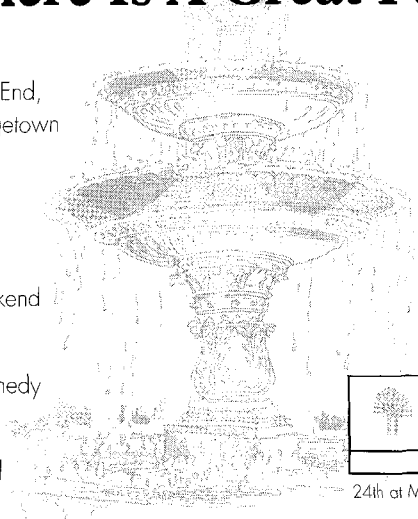

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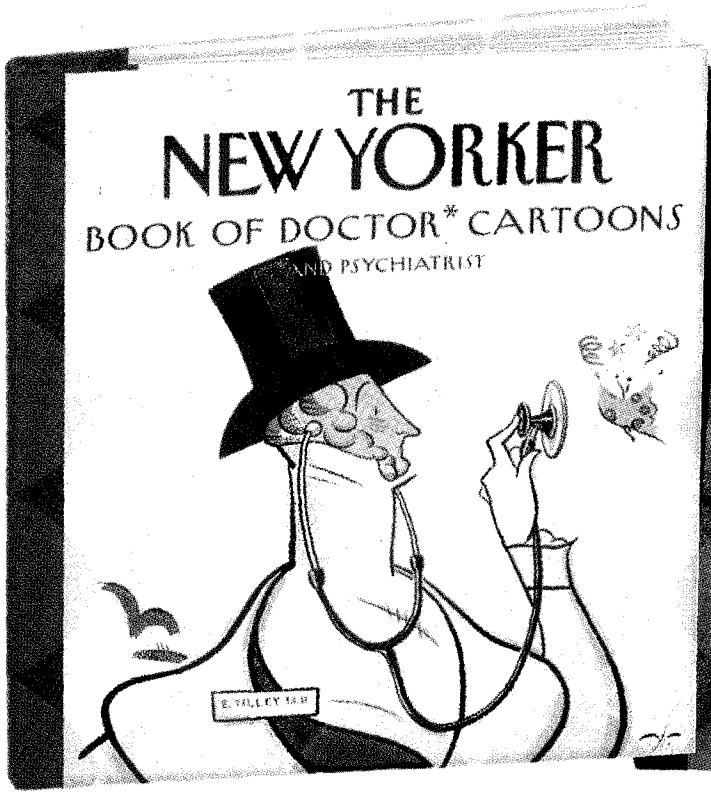

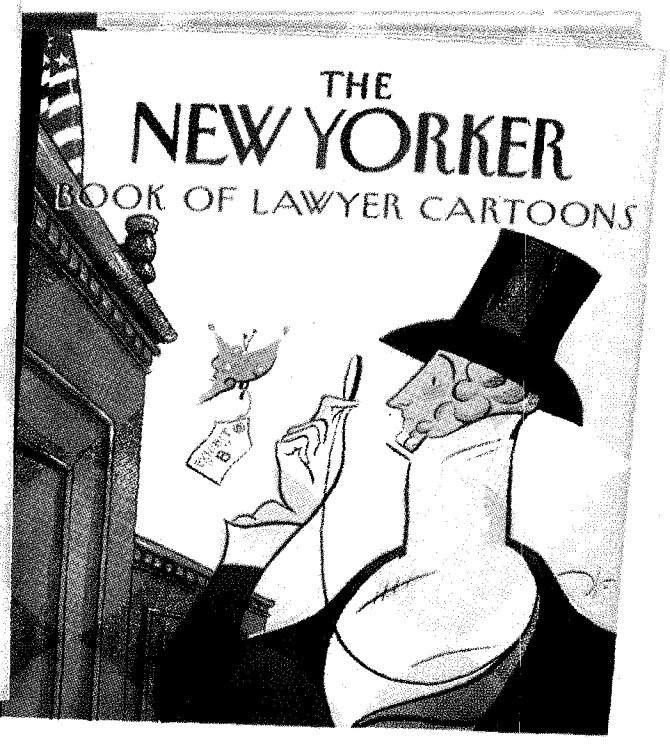

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

LEESON LESSONS

IN one of the most famous patter songs of Gilbert and Sullivan, the Lord Chancellor shuffles onstage in the second act of "Iolanthe" and recounts a vivid nightmare that has kept him tossing and turning. The dream incorporates a fantasy speculation in which "the shares are a penny, and ever so many are taken by Rothschild and Baring, And just as a few are allotted to you, you awake with a shudder despairing."

A week ago, it wasn't the Lord Chancellor but Eddie George, the governor of the Bank of England, who awoke with a shudder despairing. It appeared that a flamboyant young trader in the Singapore office of the two-hundred-and-thirty-two-year-old merchant-banking firm of Barings P.L.C., an outfit more notable for its English-public-school hauteur than for its actual clout, had taken so many (ever so many) futures contracts on the Nikkei stock index, the Japanese equivalent of the Dow Jones stock averages, that the venerable firm was wiped out.

Nicholas Leeson, the twenty-eight-year-old trader in question, who ran up more than a billion dollars in losses on commitments with a notional value of twenty-nine billion, appears to be one of the prototypical "barrow boys" satirized a few years back by the English playwright Caryl Churchill in "Serious Money," which is to say a streetwise kid from the London projects allowed to play computer games in markets that turn over trillions of dollars every day. The size of the loss; the whys and wherefores of the metastasis, whether attributable to lack of supervision or to malicious design; the destruction of one of the most illustrious names in banking; Leeson's dramatic flight and his capture, in Frankfurt—all are sufficiently sensational to guarantee that a good deal of nonsense and tabloid claptrap will be written about the affair. Some years ago, when Albert H. Gordon, the honorary chairman of Kidder, Peabody—another firm recently brought low by a young trader run amok—was asked in an interview what he remembered best about the Great Crash, he replied, "In 1929, young men thought they could do anything!" As the Barings incident teaches, that assessment still applies, but the essence of this story has more to do with computers.

NOWHERE on earth are the fancies of youth more slavishly indulged than in today's computerized securities-trading markets—largely, one suspects, because the elders in the business are baffled by these machines. Without computers, there would be no speculative market in "derivatives." These are pieces of paper (symbolized by electronic blips on the barrow boys' computer screens) that derive their market value from the market value of other, often discrete pieces of paper—which is rather like letting the price of apples in Spokane determine the price of oranges in Seville. The pricing relationships that make up the derivatives market are estimated by elaborate formulas, which nobody seems to understand, but which have become so universal that their guesses as to value have become self-fulfilling.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JARRETT HUDDLESTON

This leads to the larger moral to be drawn from Nick Leeson's unexcellent adventure—and from such prior misadventures as those in Orange County and Mexico. To paraphrase the psalmist's good advice, we should put not our trust in computers alone. Every day, it seems, in whatever sphere of existence one points to, we are confronted with powerful evidence that the rate and the manner in which these machines spew forth data—and possibility—have seduced us into surrendering the powers of judgment and instinct which allow us to control them wisely. Increasingly, we seem content merely to hang on for dear life. It is getting to be a very dangerous ride.

OF GREG LOUGANIS AND GREGETTES

SUPPORT and optimism far outweighed morbid curiosity in most of the conversations held among the more than six hundred people who recently braved the wet night air to stand in line outside A Different Light,

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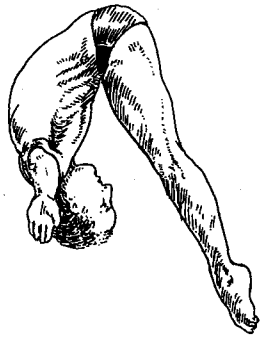
a gay bookstore on West Nineteenth Street, where the four-time Olympic-gold-medal winner Greg Louganis was signing copies of his just published autobiography.



"I don't think it's his fault, banging his head and bleeding in the pool and not telling anyone he was positive except his coach," said a middle-aged woman wearing a green plastic baseball cap, oversized Alain Mikli glasses, and a black baseball jacket with "I ♥ Greg Louganis" stencilled on the back. "He was just a kid then. He was *scared*. The doctors say chlorine kills H.I.V. It does, doesn't it?"

"Gay, gay, gay—who cares?" an elderly man said to his female companion. "I don't care. He was a great diver. I have always wanted to meet him. That's why I'm here."

"I'm a Gregette," said a young man with a shaved head, a muscular neck, and powerful arms. "I'm totally on his side. Did you read the part of Greg's book about that creepy boyfriend he had who held a knife to his neck and raped him and spent his money? It takes courage to write that."

Once inside A Different Light, and in Louganis's actual presence, his fans were generally less voluble. A kind of hush surrounded him as he signed books and photographs, accepted gifts of lavender-colored daisies, and paused to be photographed by spectators armed with disposable cameras. The quiet was due in part to the attention levelled at him, as if his recently disclosed H.I.V.-positive status could in a moment disrupt *this* moment, and irreparably change Louganis—his short-cropped, nearly silver hair, large expressive eyes, deep tan, and deeper smile. "You did good," one elderly woman said as she embraced him. "I'm a mother and I want to say I'm *proud* of you." She was followed by a thin man who shyly sidled up to the table where Louganis sat, surrounded by elements of gay awareness, or gay kitsch: a rainbow flag; a Teddy bear wearing a Speedo and several toy-size Olympic gold medals; a poster-size drawing of angels. The man said he was living with AIDS. "I just want to thank you for making me gay-*positive*," he said. Louganis thanked *him*, and the man walked away, aided by a friend.

Outside the bookstore, Louganis was pursued by loud cheers and the brittle flashes of cameras. He paused and waved before moving to his car, which was waiting to take him to an interview on "Larry King Live." Settling back in the seat, Louganis asked, of no one in particular, "How am I supposed to prepare myself for all this emotion?" He looked small and vulnerable in a large jacket, which read, on the back, "AMERICANA." "I mean, this is the first leg of the tour, and I'm already overwhelmed. It's amazing the support you get when you tell the truth." He took a sip from a small bottle of Evian water, and street lights played across his face. "The book is an extension of the time I've spent in therapy, trying not to live in a bubble. That's the new rule: no more secrets. I've wanted to do this book for such a long time, but I was so scared," he said, in a soft, measured voice that belies his thirty-five years. "Had I been out when I was young, I could have enjoyed myself so much more than I did. But nothing's over until it's over. I'm glad for the opportunity to be honest with myself and other people now. Thank God I'm still around to try and do that."

WRIGHT AGAIN—SORT OF

NOWADAYS, there's no telling what oddities may turn up on the front page of the *Times*, pretending to be hard news. A week or so ago, readers were treated to a large, two-column photograph of Frank Lloyd Wright looking over a model of a vast civic center for Madison, Wisconsin—a structure he initially designed in 1938 and kept urging year after year upon the reluctant citizens of Madison, in one form or another and always in vain, until his death, in 1959. The photograph, which introduced a long account on an inner page of the paper describing the design as it is currently being realized, was captioned "FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT'S NEWEST PROJECT." That line is about as whimsical as the *Times* ever gets, not only because it implied that the ghost of the crafty old genius-impresario is still eagerly at work among us but also because the project has been redesigned by Anthony Puttnam, of Taliesin Architects, for a purpose very different from the one that Wright originally had in mind. Wright's intention was to create along the shore of Lake Monona a five-deck structure covering seven and a half acres, which would spread fanwise out over the lake, with gardens and fountains on the top deck and, on the decks below, cocktail lounges, restaurants, art galleries, state and county offices, a jail, parking facilities, and a marina. The project that is at last under construction is primarily a convention center, calculated to attract business to downtown Madison, and it is about half as big as Wright had planned it to be—not only diminished Wright but tamed Wright.

When Wright was a boy, his family lived in a little house overlooking Lake Mendota, the largest of Madison's four lakes. Wright retained a sentimental attachment to the city, mingled with a feeling of bitterness because the University of Wisconsin never offered him an honorary degree—he had dropped out in his late teens—and because the state had never commissioned a building from him. Portmanteau megabuildings of the kind that Wright wished to impose on Lake Monona became something of a fad in the fifties and sixties; they were an ill-conceived notion then and they remain an ill-conceived notion

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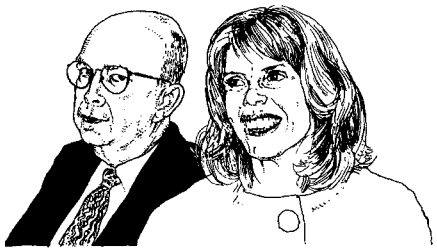
today. Wright designed one such structure that actually got built—the Marin County Civic Center, in San Rafael, California, whose immense arches boldly bestride a couple of steep hills in a fashion reminiscent of the Roman-built Pont du Gard, in the South of France. Contrary to the common belief, Wright liked big, showy, bowwow buildings. Though he preached that the best architecture hugged the earth, whenever he got a chance he would let fly with buildings that dominated everything around them and could be seen from miles away. A few years before his death, he called a press conference in Chicago to sell the locals on what he called the Mile High Illinois: five thousand vertical feet of offices on five hundred floors, providing shelter for a hundred thousand people, fifteen thousand automobiles, and a hundred helicopters. There were no takers for the Mile High, and no wonder.

The presence of Wright's picture on the front page of the *Times* almost thirty-six years after his death would have struck him as proving that what he called his honest arrogance was, as always, justified: he had been right and the rest of the world had been wrong. But the small city of Madison is far better off constructing a modest convention center than it would have been with the grandiose marine palazzo that Wright envisioned.

McCAUGHEY & ROSS ON THE STATE OF THEIR UNION

UNLIKE some other Power Odd Couples one could name, Elizabeth McCaughey and Wilbur Ross, Jr., did not tell the world of their love by means of a press conference. They are not a frivolous pair. McCaughey is the former policy wonk who, in a transformation worthy of Cinderella, became the lieutenant governor of New York in January; Ross is an investment banker, Democratic fund-raiser, and cultural pooh-bah. In a recent conversation, they confronted head on the political ramifications of their alliance, which is to be solemnized at the Church of the Heavenly Rest on September 15th, when the State Senate, over which McCaughey presides, is out of session. McCaughey stated for the record that "Wilbur Ross is unequivocally committed and loyal to the Pataki administration." Ross, for his part, conceded that he had been a longtime supporter of Mario Cuomo, and that prior to last fall's election he had rarely supported a Republican. He was asked if he thought his switch in affiliation would prove to be an anomaly. "I would hardly call our relationship an anomaly," Ross replied, gazing at his fiancée with the stiff dignity of another century.

The conversation took place on a Saturday, but both parties to the union



arrived at the Mayfair Hotel in full uniform—Ross in blue suit, blue shirt, and blue tie, McCaughey in a navy suit with big gold buttons. They sat beside each other on a gold settee, Ross sipping from an iced espresso, McCaughey from a cup of tea. It was not an entirely comfortable occasion. However a certain United States senator and a certain gossip columnist may feel about it, romance is a rather uneasy interview topic for people of a certain age and position, and the conversation in the Mayfair tended to slide toward matters of professional expertise. Ross spoke of his effort to find private buyers for New York's WNYC television and radio stations—a proposal that has some listeners, not to mention WNYC's board, in an uproar. McCaughey talked about *her* task of identifying possible cuts in the state's Medicaid program, an undertaking that has many legislators and advocates for the poor in an uproar. "I have a copy of the budget sitting right on my desk at home," she said, as if it were the latest Danielle Steel. "I'm quite proud of our new budget." McCaughey has a formidable set of teeth, and as she said this she flashed a smile as blinding as a pair of headlights.

WILBUR ROSS is a bankerly character—solemn, elliptical, and self-possessed. He specializes in "restructurings"—bankruptcy, to the laity—and has applied his skills not just to corporations but to cultural institutions, too. As co-chairman of the New-York Historical Society, Ross was, he says, the "grandfather" of a controversial fund-raising scheme that involved the sale of a large portion of the Society's collection of European Old Master paintings and which has, at least temporarily, staved off ruin for the museum. But Ross left the board in the middle of the process, an act that he characterizes as voluntary but which other board members call a result of pervasive distrust; certainly it was an extraordinarily schismatic act in the world of nonprofit boards.

He is a man around whom many rumors swirl. One is that, despite his nuptial plans, he is not divorced from his wife. On being asked this indelicate question point blank, Ross said, in his slightly involved way, "We have no big problems in getting married." A bit later, he said, "We're all set." Still later, it was learned that Ross is in fact not divorced, and he was given one last chance to clarify matters. "There are," he repeated, "no problems with our getting married."

McCaughey closed the session with a heartwarming anecdote about her boss's political rival Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who, she said, had come upon the couple last December as they staggered along Third Avenue laden with packages from last-minute Christmas shopping, and carried them away in his white van, like a motorized knight. McCaughey smiled and finished her tea, and all departed, heaving sighs of profound relief.

A KUSHNER CODA

IN Tony Kushner's thought-provoking and moving adaptation of "A Dybbuk, or Between Two Worlds," which is now receiving its world première in a stylish production by Mark Lamos at the Hartford Stage Company, Khonen, a young Talmudic scholar, dies of frustration when Leah, the woman he loves, is betrothed by her father to a more prosperous suitor. The fathers of Leah and of Khonen, it turns out, were schoolboy friends who vowed that one day their children would be joined in

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marriage. In the years that followed, Leah's father grew rich and worldly, and forgot his childhood friend and his promise. Khonen, however, never forgets. He returns from the dead to claim his bride.

Rabbinical-minded scholars of theatrical commentary may recall the role of the Hartford Stage in a brouhaha that broke out a little more than two years ago, when Kushner chose George C. Wolfe to direct "Angels in America" on Broadway. The trouble was that Wolfe had to jettison a commitment to another play, Jose Rivera's "Marisol," at Hartford, in order to do "Angels." In the not-for-profit-theatre world, which was already aggrieved that "Angels" was going to Broadway, this was the ultimate insult. Lamos, who is the artistic director of the Hartford Stage, called the selection of Wolfe "reprehensible," and Kushner and Lamos stopped speaking. All of which made it seem unlikely that Kushner—whose version of Corneille's "The Illusion" had been successfully directed by Lamos in 1990—would fulfill a long-standing pledge to adapt "A Dybbuk" for Hartford.

Had Kushner, like Leah's father, abandoned his youthful commitments? As anyone who knows Kushner will attest, although his capacity to remain on speaking terms with his directors may momentarily lapse, his allegiance to the not-for-profit theatre does not. "I really assumed that Mark and I were not going to work together again," he says. "But we sort of kissed and made up fairly quickly." One agent of the rapprochement was the editor Elizabeth Osborne, a friend of both parties, who wrote Kushner what he describes as a "very, very tart letter" about the importance of regional theatre. "She quoted in the letter things that Mark had said about 'Angels' which really pissed me off," Kushner says. "But that got us talking again."

Osborne died of cancer in 1992. At the time of her death, she was organizing a biography of the director John Hirsch who once staged an acclaimed "Dybbuk" of his own, and who had died of AIDS three years earlier. Lamos has dedicated the current production of Kushner's "Dybbuk" to the memory of both Osborne and Hirsch. For a play that is about the ways in which the dead speak to the living—about, Lamos says, "love after death"—the dedication seems unusually apt.

MY FATHER WAS A SNOWMAN

My father was a snowman, but he melted.

All that's left is his eyes—two pieces of coal—
that sit on my kitchen table
and watch me as I walk around the room.

I ate his nose a long time ago.

—SPARROW

HAIR-RAISING

ONE possibly sound reason for feelings of severe helplessness on the East Coast these dry winter mornings is static electricity, especially in your hair. At least one ladies' room in New York was buzzing, or even sizzling, with the problem.

A YOUNG WOMAN WITH JITTERY LONG RED HAIR: As soon as I get out of bed and lift the bedclothes, if I peel the top sheet off the bottom sheet and it sort of crackles, then I think, I'm not going to be able to *touch* my hair today. Which is terrifying. When I lift my brush, the hair rises off my head to meet the brush like a snake rising to a snake charmer. I feel victimized.

A MOTHER OF GROWN DAUGHTERS: The girls used to get hysterical when there was electricity in the air—they'd refuse to go to school. Normally, they had perfect hair.

ON a morning like this, it was impossible to distract a victim from the subject of static electricity, particularly when a pullover just left her hair sticking willfully to the sides of her face. Then another woman might mention her addiction to Static Guard. There were further confessions.

THE MOTHER: I had to keep a can of Static Guard on hand *all the time*. In the morning, the girls would line up and I'd spray them.

THE REDHEAD: I have a can at the office and a can at home. I'll tell you a secret: I used to spray it directly on my head. You should have seen the look on the face of my haircutter when I told him—he made me feel so bad I've ended up using a pair of underpants I had in my office, a souvenir from the New Orleans Jazz Festival. I've never worn them—I put Static Guard on them and rub them on my head. (*A small pause.*) When I was little, my sister and I would sort of flap our blanket up and down—you can actually see blue sparks. It's pretty cool. Actually, I wonder if you could set yourself on fire.

A TELEPHONE call with a representative for Static Guard, at Alberto-Culver, U.S.A.

REPORTER: Is it dangerous to spray it directly on your hair?

COMPANY SPOKESPERSON: I don't know what it exactly does, but—I'd have to verify to see if it's O.K. or not. But I would spray it on the *brush*, just because I'm not sure about getting it in your eyes. But I'll be honest with you—personally, for me, I would use a hair-care product specifically for *my* problem, an anti-frizz product that would give it a little more shine and would *control* flyaways and static cling, and I'd use that over Static Guard.

REPORTER: I think you're an optimistic person. Are you?

COMPANY SPOKESPERSON: I think, like most people, if I have a problem I tend to look for the solution and therefore the problem is gone.

FINALLY, a tonic dissenting thought from a WORLD-WEARY MALE HAIRCUTTER ON MADISON AVENUE: Static electricity? Let me ask you something. Why all you woman all the time make yourself so sad and unhappy? ♦

This week's contributors: Michael M. Thomas, Hilton Als, Brendan Gill, James Traub, Arthur Lubow, Alison Rose.

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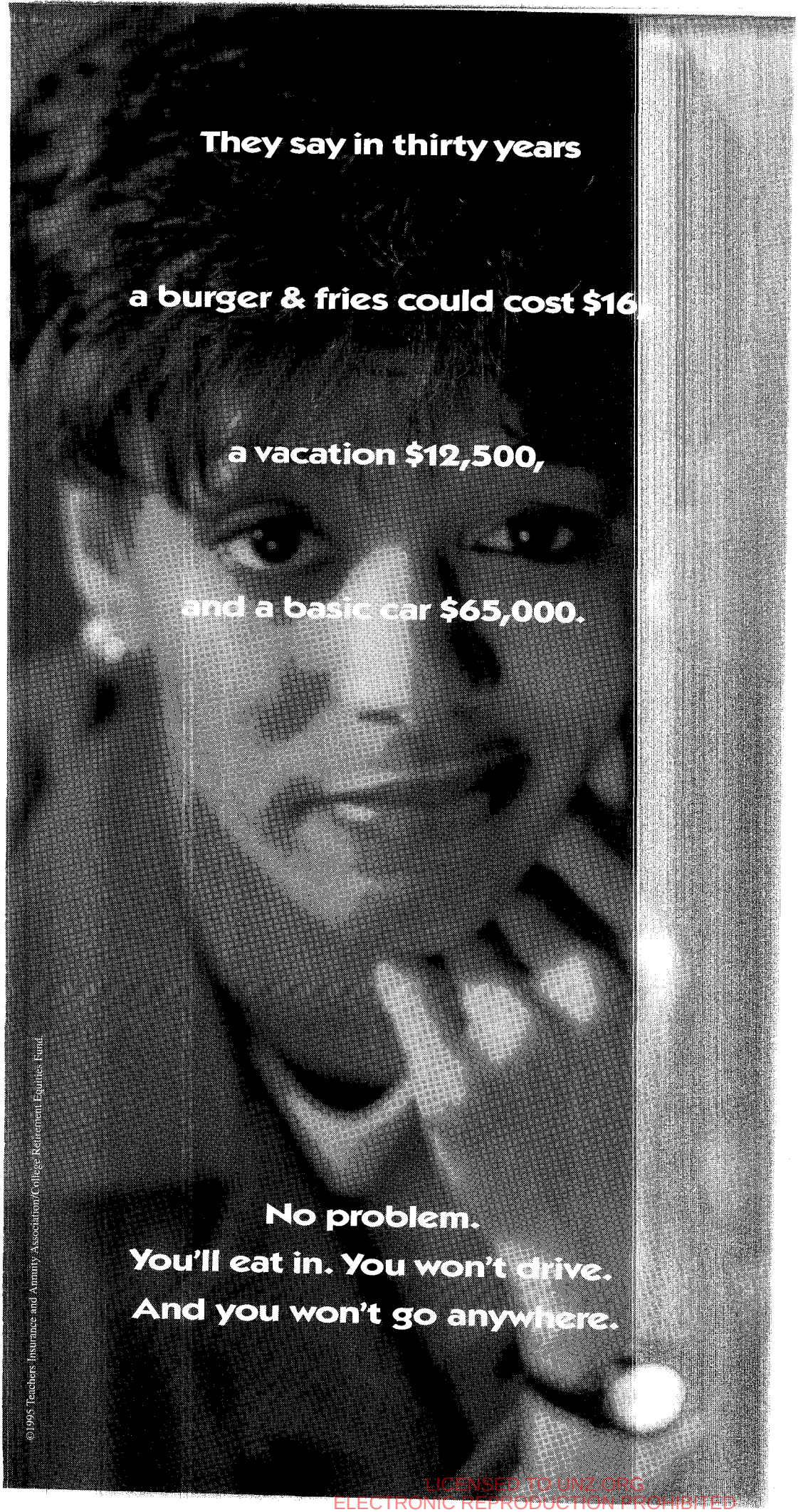

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LETTER FROM MEXICO

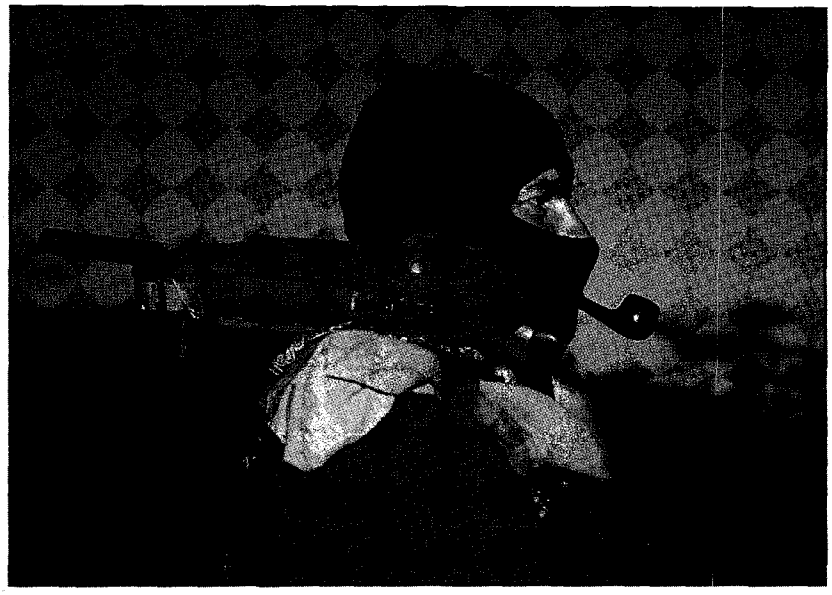
THE UNMASKING

In a country turned upside down, a weak President tries to gain control with a devastating campaign against the Zapatistas' outlaw hero.

BY ALMA GUILLERMOPRIETO

MARCH 3RD

ON the evening of February 9th, at a press conference in Mexico City that had been announced less than two hours before, an aide to the Attorney General played a strange game of peekaboo with photographers and a crowd of sweating, jostling reporters. In his right hand the aide held an oversized black-and-white slide of a ski mask and a pair of large, dark eyes, and in his left a black-and-white photograph of a Milquetoasty-looking young man with a beard and large, dark eyes. After we were allowed to study the two for a few seconds, the aide slipped the slide over the photograph. Voilà! Subcomandante Marcos, the dashing leader of an Indian peasant revolt in southeastern Mexico, the hero of a thousand fervent letters addressed to the Mexican nation, the postmodern revolutionary who has contributed mightily to what in this turbulent year, with its hemorrhaging economy and political murder scandals, looks like the steady crumbling of a sixty-six-year-old regime—this masked idol is a Clark Kent. His name, the Attorney General announced, is Rafael Sebastián Guillén, and he is a philosophy graduate and former university professor. The aide continued imposing the slide of Marcos on the photograph of Guillén and flipping them apart again—now we saw him, now we didn't—until the storm of camera flashes subsided, and then we left.



Is the swashbuckling Marcos really a Clark Kent?

WESLEY BOCXE/JB PICTURES

The revelation of Marcos's identity was part of a two-pronged strategy by President Ernesto Zedillo Ponce de León to break the stalemate that has existed in the state of Chiapas since the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, or E.Z.L.N.—a ragtag army of Mayan peasants led by Subcomandante Marcos—rose up in revolt there, on January 1, 1994. Even as we watched the slide show, Army troops were preparing to move into the mountainous and overwhelmingly rural southeastern part of Chiapas—almost on the border with Guatemala—where the Zapatistas had maintained their unofficially recognized *territorio liberado* for thirteen

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months. Villages were being retaken without a fight, and their inhabitants, including the Zapatista fighters among them, were fleeing into the ravines and the jungle-covered mountains. President Zedillo said that the Army was going into the area only to provide backing for the federal agents who would attempt to serve Marcos with an arrest warrant, but this was a transparent excuse, for thousands of troops swarmed in, and have continued to take positions farther and farther inside the territory.

Before the offensive began, the stalemate between the Zapatistas and the government had lasted so long that it seemed permanent. All actual fighting ended barely twelve days after the New Year's Day rebellion got under way last year, in the lovely town of San Cristóbal de las Casas. The peasant army had vowed in its declaration of war that it would march to Mexico City and overthrow the government of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari, but, instead, it suffered significant losses and scored no military victories. It did, however, capture Mexicans' imagination: televised interviews of Mayan peasants in makeshift uniforms, who said that they were fighting not only for a change in their own desperate circumstances but to rid the nation of a corrupt and slothful regime, brought thousands of demonstrators out into the streets all over Mexico during the first days of January, demanding an end to what threatened to turn into an Army slaughter of the armed Zapatistas and their families.

Faced with the politically volatile option of turning the Army against its own people, Salinas, on January 12th, called for a ceasefire. Thereafter, and through the transfer of power in December from Salinas to Ernesto Zedillo, following the Presidential elections last August, talks and attempts at talks promoted by both sides led to no fruitful agreement, but they at least kept the ceasefire from breaking down. Even in December, when the Zapatistas pushed beyond their control zone to protest the stalemate and what they saw as massive fraud in the elections for governor of Chiapas, the rebels and the government troops managed to come within a few hundred feet of each other without a shot being fired.

The Army's offensive certainly appears to have taken Marcos completely by surprise. Much of the anxious speculation about what will happen next in Chiapas centers on his personality and his aims—on what he believes in and to what lengths he is willing to take the war. Will he negotiate to keep his peasant troops from suffering further? Does he really want nothing less than the overthrow of the government? And is he in fact the man in the photograph?

As far as I could tell on the night of the Attorney General's press conference, as I tried to make the ten-year-old I.D. shot of a bland Rafael Guillén jibe with my recollection of the masked man I had talked with last April, the ski-masked slide we were being shown could have been slipped just as persuasively over a photograph of Richard Nixon. The Marcos whom I and other journalists interviewed in the Zapatista control zone was a mesmerizing personality—self-possessed, considerate, ironic, and theatrical. He liked to make journalists spend hours, or days, waiting for him, and then he would appear in the dead of night and talk endlessly, puffing on a pipe, tugging at the uncomfortable ski mask, and asking as many questions as he answered—uncannily well informed about the intellectual and media world beyond Chiapas. When I said that it was delusionary to think that the Zapatistas could really take Mexico City, he answered, "Weren't we there already by January 2nd? We were everywhere, on the lips of everyone—in the subway, on the radio. And our flag was in the Zócalo"—the central plaza.

While the resemblance between Guillén's eyes and Marcos's—the only part of his physiognomy we are all acquainted with—is not conclusive (Marcos's are a hazel-brown, for one, and the photograph is black-and-white), the account of the E.Z.L.N.'s history and Marcos's role in it which the Attorney General's office has been leaking to the press does coincide with much that has been said privately about Marcos in Chiapas for some time.

According to what can be pieced together from these convergent accounts, the E.Z.L.N. has its roots in the Latin-American guerrilla movements that sprang up in Mexico beginning in the tumultuous nineteen-sixties. In the early seventies, one of those guerrilla groups, the Fuerzas de Liberación Nacional, or

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F.L.N., had a training camp in Chiapas, near Ocosingo, a town that sits on the edge of what later became the Zapatista control zone. In 1974, the Army raided that camp, arrested several of the guerrillas, and "disappeared" three others, including a woman whose first name was Elisa. People here have speculated that one of the guerrillas who survived—the brother of one of the disappeared men—took refuge in the north of Mexico for a few years and then returned to Chiapas, using the code name Germán. He was either accompanied by or eventually joined by a dozen others, among them a second-year woman medical student, who had been captured in a raid on another F.L.N. camp. After spending a few months in jail, she had been granted a Presidential amnesty. In Chiapas, she took the code name Elisa—presumably in honor of the disappeared guerrilla from the Ocosingo camp. Sometime around 1984, a year after the E.Z.L.N.'s official founding, a young, bright philosophy graduate who was known first as Zacarías and then, much more recently, as Marcos, linked up with these comrades in Chiapas. The government claims that Subcomandante Marcos—that is, Rafael Guillén—is the son of a prosperous furniture retailer from Tampico, and was a leftist activist student and a teacher at a Mexico City university before he left for Chiapas. It also claims that, although Comandante Germán is still at large, Comandante Elisa was captured two days before the February 10th offensive.

At the university, a fairly radical enclave called the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana, which was founded in 1973, people certainly remember Guillén. In the early nineteen-eighties, a friend of mine who taught there recalls, the faculty saw social activism as part of its mandate. "We wanted to put the emphasis as much on practice as on theory, and we understood that it was our duty to give back to the community what we received from it," he says. "We were all radicals, particularly those of us in the Design Science and Arts Division. But no one was more radical than a group of young, brilliant, serious, and hardworking teachers in the Department of Theory and Analysis. Guillén and Silvia"—Silvia Hernández, an E.Z.L.N. founding member—"were in the middle of that group. I thought *we* were perhaps too sectarian, but they beat us. They kept strictly to themselves, like a little family. But they came up with very original, very creative projects. They were big on Althusser"—Louis Althusser, the French philosopher—"on his theories of ideology and communication, and on something they called *gráfica monumental*. Before they left the school, they did a wonderful mural for the auditorium—it's still there today."

My friend could not say for certain, at twelve years' remove, whether the man he remembered as Rafael Guillén would prove to be Marcos. Most reporters who have interviewed Marcos have no opinion on his likeness to Guillén's mug shot, but none of us could fail to notice how much Marcos talks like one of Guillén's brothers—Alfonso Guillén, a university professor in Baja California Sur, who was shown on television on February 9th being hounded by reporters as he tried to explain, with much of Marcos's striking calmness and courtesy, why he had not seen his brother Rafael in several years. There were other clues as well: before the Army incursion, the "capital" of the Zapatistas' *territorio liberado* was an impressively large performance space built out of nothing in a clearing in the jungle and presided over by an amphitheatre whose benches covered the entire face of a steep triangular hill and whose rostrum was fronted with socialist-realist paintings—surrealist, in their jungle surroundings—that recalled the mural at the university.

Marcos's preoccupation with symbolic language is certainly worthy of a student of Althusser. He has created his own dazzling image as a masked *mito genial*—his term, meaning an inspired act of mythmaking. He has staged a very real, threatening war on the Mexican state based on almost no firepower and a brilliant use of Mexicans' most resonant images: the Revolution, the peasants' unending struggle for dignity and recognition, the betrayed Emiliano Zapata. And he has used his writing: what we know about Marcos is mostly what he has written about himself. "How do you manage to write so much?" he asked me enviously when he showed up at last on the night we talked, in a hamlet in the Zapatista control zone in April. I pointed out that writing was what I did for a living, whereas he had a revolution to run and nevertheless managed to produce reams of copy. (Rather more than my output, in fact. The collected letters and communiqués he published in the Mexican press in the first eight months of last year alone have just been turned into a good-sized book.) It had not dawned on me then that the most visible and critical part of the Zapatistas' revolution was the letters that the Mexican press publishes regularly—particularly the long, sometimes poetic, sometimes irreverent, personified postscripts that are the Subcomandante's contribution to epistolary art. Now swaggering, now full of righteous fury, now impudent and hip, the Marcos of the postscripts is at all times both elusive and intimate, and this seductive knack has allowed him to become a faceless stand-in for all the oppressed, an anonymous vessel for all fantasies from the sexual to the bellicose, a star.

Marcos's letters exhibit an intense, self-involved romanticism, and so did Rafael Guillén's senior thesis at the university, which was ostensibly about Althusser and really about himself. Guillén wrote, "One thing is certain: the philosopher is 'different'; he belongs to a strange lineage of 'sensibilities that keep themselves at a prudent distance from the trite'; he can reflect with a brilliant phrase that will eventually pass into posterity on the death of an ant squashed as it tries to cross a busy street at 8 P.M. . . . His hair is disorderly and his beard unkempt, his gaze is continually ecstatic, as in an orgasm not yet achieved; cigarettes and coffee are part of his persona." Marcos, too, likes to come up with little fables about ants and rather personal things about sex. ("The anchor's long chain . . . groans when it is detached from its moist bed like our sex from the feminine belly," he wrote last August.)

When Marcos arrived in Chiapas to join his friends—lugging too many books through the jungle, by his own account—he found fertile ground

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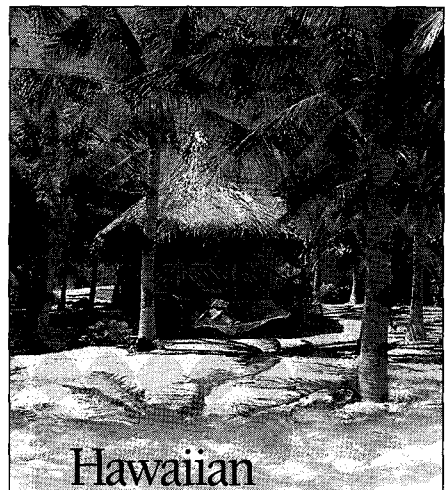
for a rebellion. The southeastern part of the state, where the revolt first took hold, and where the Zapatistas eventually set up their control zone, is one of the most backward in all Mexico, but it is also an area whose inhabitants were already familiar with and eager for ideological debate. The region is known as Las Cañadas, or the Canyons. It has no paved roads, no phones, little electricity, hardly any working schools, and a soaring population-growth rate. It was settled by campesino migrants from other parts of the state and from the rest of Mexico, most of them Mayan Indians who speak Tojolabal, Tzeltal, and Tzotzil, and little Spanish, and came to what used to be the nearly uninhabited Lacandón jungle in search of land where they could grow their corn and raise their families in peace. For years, the Bishop of San Cristóbal, Samuel Ruíz, had preached Indian rights and egalitarianism in the hamlets of Las Cañadas, and also for years radical activists had done organizing work in the communities—sometimes in agreement with Bishop Ruíz's network of priests and deacons, sometimes at odds with them.

The radicals' work was increasingly successful as the land ran out and, once cleared of its jungle covering, turned stingy. Government repression helped, and so did private attacks. Chiapas is an actively racist state; its cattle ranchers enlisted moonlighting policemen, soldiers, and ranch hands to terrorize—and, fairly often, to murder—the Indian peasants who, with Bishop Ruíz's encouragement, were daring to organize themselves. People from Chiapas who know Las Cañadas well say that Marcos, Germán, and Elisa usurped the Church's existing network of priests and deacons to promote "self-defense brigades," and gained credibility among the population by offering health services. (Whether the demure dark-haired former medical student who was presented to the press as Elisa, and is married to a freelance television producer—also under arrest—is really the E.Z.L.N. comandante is uncertain. She has disavowed her initial confession, saying that government agents blindfolded her and threatened the life of her two-year-old son to make her sign it, but, as far as I know, she has not specifically denied that she is Elisa.)

According to several accounts, the guerrillas' work added to the divisions in the by now radicalized communities. Some of Bishop Ruíz's most deeply committed followers abandoned him to join the E.Z.L.N. So did many of the campesinos initially organized by the radicals, whose leaders had by the late nineteen-eighties embarked on a series of close alliances with the government. On the other hand, many campesinos who had opted for the guerrillas' self-defense courses were offended by their theories of dialectical materialism and by their denial of the existence of God. (In the process of becoming "Indianized," Marcos told me, "there was a certain amount of clashing while we made the adjustment between our orthodox way of seeing the world in terms of bourgeois and proletarians to the community's world view," and I assume that he was referring to the clash over religion.)

Sometime around 1993, the guerrillas themselves appear to have suffered, if not a split, at least a serious difference of opinion. People say they have heard stories that Marcos, on the basis of his organizing work, was convinced that Las Cañadas was ripe for an insurrection that would set off a revolutionary spark throughout Mexico. Apparently, neither Germán nor Elisa felt this to be the case, and they left the zone.

It seems unlikely that the government found out what we now know about the E.Z.L.N. from Elisa and the other guerrillas captured the day before the Attorney General's press conference. For all the mystery surrounding the Zapatistas, the rebels had plenty of connections to both the Salinas and the Zedillo administrations, and it makes more sense to guess that information gathered from these sources had been known and kept for use at the moment when the government might decide that further attempts to reach a negotiated settlement with the Zapatistas would be fruitless. One former radical who has joined the establishment is Adolfo Orive, a founder of Política Popular, the radical movement that first organized the Indian peasants in Las Cañadas; he is now Zedillo's chief adviser on rural affairs. Another is a ruling-party *diputado*, or member of the House of Representatives, who for years was part of the E.Z.L.N.'s high command, and is now known to the Zapatistas as a trai-



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"In the future, son, everyone will be an attorney for fifteen minutes."

• •

tor. And then there is Raúl Salinas de Gortari, the "troublesome brother" of the former President, as the newsweekly *Proceso* called him in a prescient cover story last year. Raúl Salinas is a very wealthy man, an engineer with a post-graduate degree from a French university, a sometime litterateur. He has also, of course, just been indicted on charges of conspiring to murder his former brother-in-law—José Francisco Ruíz Massieu, the secretary-general of the ruling party, who was assassinated last September. And he is a former Maoist who, together with Orive and, apparently, Comandante Germán, was active in Política Popular, nearly two decades ago.

The warrant for the arrest of Rafael Guillén announced on February 9th has allowed the Zedillo administration to leak much of its hoarded information and rumor, but the government has not succeeded in what appears to have been its primary goal. The plan to disillusion Marcos's admirers with the revelation that the daring guerrilla is a sappy-looking academic full of old-line Marxist dogma worked for about seventy-two hours. A young acquaintance of mine who used to swoon at Marcos's name took one look at Guillén's photograph and said "*Guácala!*"—"Yuck!" That was on a Thursday. The following Sunday, the Mexico City papers received the first communiqué from Marcos since he, his troops, and his campesino followers retreated from their villages into the hills. It had three of his trademark addendums, in which the postscript itself becomes a character in a drama, and a signoff:

P.S. that rabidly applauds this new "success" of the government police: I heard they've found another "Marcos," and that he's from Tampico. That doesn't sound bad, the port is nice. I remember when I used to work as a bouncer in a brothel in Ciudad Madero [near Tampico], in the days when [a corrupt oilworkers'-union leader] used to do the same thing to the regional economy that Salinas did with the stock market; inject money into it to hide poverty. . . .

P.S. that despite the circumstances does not abandon its narcissism: So . . . Is this new Subcomandante Marcos good-looking? Because lately they've been assigning me really ugly ones and my feminine correspondence gets ruined.

P.S. that counts time and ammunition: I have 300 bullets, so try to bring 299 soldiers and police to get me. (Legend has it that I don't miss a shot; would you like to find out if it's true?) Why 299, if there's 300 bullets? Well, because the last one is for yours truly. It turns out that one gets fond of things like this, and a bullet seems to be the only consolation for this solitary heart.

Vale again. *Salud*, and can it be that there will be a little spot for me in her heart?

[signed] The Sup [Subcomandante], rearranging his ski mask with macabre flirtatiousness.

In five short paragraphs, the Sup reëstablished his credentials as an outlaw hero, brought sex into the issue, and, yanking back the mask his pursuers had torn off, donned it once more. Two demonstrations were called by solidarity committees in Mexico City to protest the military attack on the Zapatistas and the arrest warrants on the E.Z.L.N. leadership; according to press reports, tens of thousands of people showed up.

THERE was a very real sense in which, during the past thirteen months, Marcos fought the Zapatista war single-handed. It was, after all, a public-relations war, and the Indian fighters—most of whom spoke little Spanish, and for whom the government had provided, at most, a few years of elementary schooling—were not equipped for the sophisticated exchanges with the government and the Mexican public which such a war required. It was Marcos who wrote the letters, and also the communiqués signed by something called the Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee–General Command, which is supposedly the highest authority within the E.Z.L.N. (It is more likely the body, consisting of village authorities, that makes the real decisions affecting daily life in the Zapatista zone, while Marcos himself seems to have decisive influence, if not absolute power, in questions having to do with war and relations with the central government.) It was Marcos who granted the vast majority of the interviews—or, at least, the ones that got quoted. It was he who drew up the list of accredited "war correspondents," and signed our laminated mint-green credentials. It was he who stage-managed the moving E.Z.L.N. events at which glamorous visitors from Mexico City and abroad watched Indian peasants pa-

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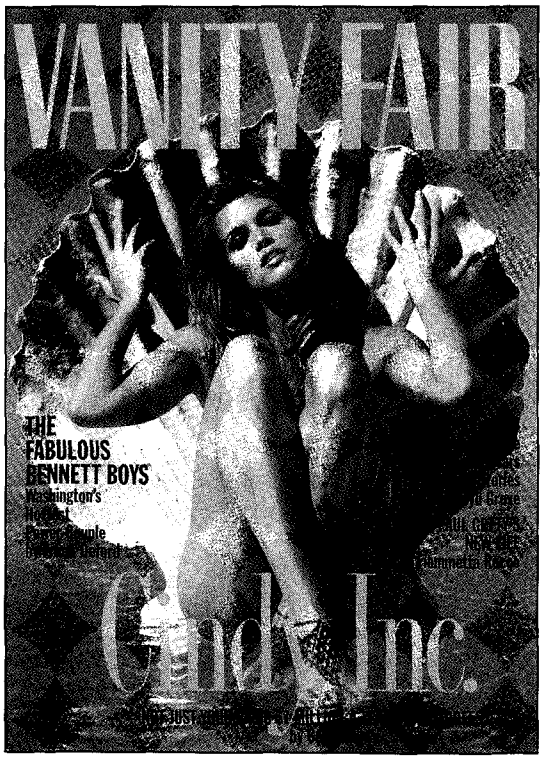

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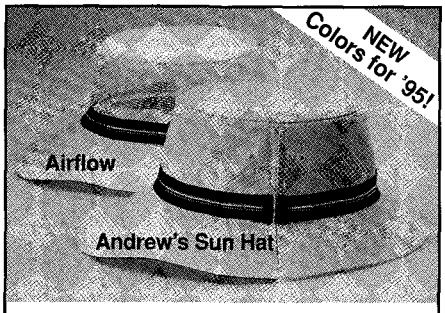

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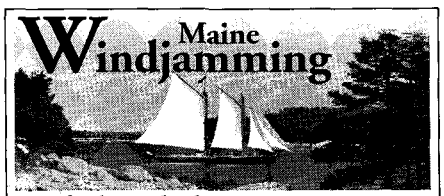

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rade in homemade uniforms, carrying hunting rifles and other guns and—in the absence of real weapons—carved-wood imitations of guns. And it was his adroit manipulation of this array of symbolic weapons that mobilized public opinion in favor of the E.Z.L.N. and kept the war the Zapatistas had invited at bay.

Marcos, however, cannot fight a real war by himself, and, on the basis of the Army's stunning advance over the last three weeks, it seems that any attempt by the E.Z.L.N. troops to take on the Mexican Army can end only in tragedy. The total number of dead that reporters have reliably been able to come up with for the offensive is fewer than ten, and this is because, rather than fight, the Zapatistas and their families fled by the thousand into the jungly, ravine-crossed mountains that stand between their homes, in the former control zone, and what remains of the Lacandón jungle.

Just about a year ago, the government, desperate to appease the rebels of Las Cañadas, offered a settlement involving a cornucopia of social-works projects—health clinics and roads and electrification programs—and the insurgent peasants proudly turned down the offer, declaring that they wanted democracy as well. Less than a month ago, they were a defiant force, the improbable vanguard of a leftist movement that had finally managed to pose a real challenge to Zedillo's decrepit ruling party. Now the Zapatistas are terrified, sick with fear and hunger and in awe of the display of tanks and cannons the Army has ostentatiously deployed throughout the former control zone. Marcos continues to produce communiqués, but they are days late in arriving, evidently because an excellent communications network that included faxes and a satellite phone is no longer in place. As he did throughout the thirteen months of ceasefire, he continues to warn that, although the Zapatistas want peace, and have therefore refrained from war, they can be pushed only so far.

But it is hard to see how much farther the rebels can be pushed without calling it defeat. Those of us who watched the repeated Zapatista military parades last year, and saw the carved-wood weapons, assumed that the four hundred or so troops who used to march were representative of thousands of others, and that the wooden weapons could, on the day of reckoning, be turned in for something to fight with. Perhaps we were wrong. "The E.Z.L.N. is not willing to hold a dialogue in humiliating conditions," a recent communiqué stated. In other words, the E.Z.L.N. has been humiliated. An amnesty law sent to Congress by Zedillo will most likely be approved. It is a surrender treaty disguised as a dialogue offer, and there is a good chance that the Zapatistas will sign it; significant numbers of their supporters are already starting to return to the villages.

THE new prominence of the military establishment is only one of the worrying aspects of the Chiapas conflict. In the space of two weeks, the evening news led off with three different military ceremonies attended by Zedillo. Although the Zapatistas' support network in the United States pumped up the Internet with reports of widespread killing by the Army, reporters could find no trace of these events, and it appears instead that the military has behaved with remarkable restraint by Latin-American standards. By these standards, restraint means that many peasants who did not flee have been arbitrarily detained in their villages, and are being threatened, beaten, asphyxiated, or deprived of food, so that they will denounce the Zapatistas among them. Essentially, the remilitarization of the Chiapas conflict means that the Mexican Army has been turned into an occupying force.

Then, there is the economic disaster that it has been Zedillo's lot to preside over. The best that can be expected is that the Mexican economy will remain in recession for at least a year, and it is not clear how money can be found to buy stability in Chiapas, where the economy has collapsed. Who will pay the taxes to pay for the public works demanded not only by the Zapatistas but now by virtually all of Chiapas's impoverished peasant population? And where is the land that can satisfy the campesinos' hunger, now that so much of the Lacandón jungle has been deforested and settled?

There was a phrase one heard everywhere last year, stated sometimes fear-

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fully, sometimes with joy: "*Los indios perdieron el miedo*"—"The Indians are no longer afraid." Made fearless by the armed Zapatistas, *los indios* invaded some two thousand cattle ranches and coffee farms. The owners are threatening to take up arms in defense of their land. *Los indios* also did fierce, bloody battle with each other over issues of religion and politics, which always had their roots in land disputes. Even if the Zapatistas are brought to their knees, these conflicts remain unresolved.

THERE is a dreamlike quality about the speed with which the world that the Zapatistas created in their stronghold is being dismantled. Their pride, their monument, the capital of their *territorio liberado*—a ceremonial space baptized Aguascalientes, in honor of the site of the constitutional convention that was called by the revolutionaries of 1914, and in which Emiliano Zapata played a preponderant role—is gone. The Zapatistas built Aguascalientes last July in preparation for a National Democratic Convention called by Marcos, which was attended by thousands of Mexican delegates and hundreds of reporters from all over the world. Mexicans are lavish hosts, and the impoverished Indians of Las Cañadas were no exception. They cleared the jungle to build guesthouses, a kitchen, parking lots, even a library with makeshift bookshelves, so that their literate guests could feel at home. And they built the amphitheatre, with a primitive rostrum to rival the one in the national Congress, in Mexico City, and gave it as a backdrop two enormous Mexican flags, just like the ones in Congress. In front of the rostrum, there was a parade space for the marching troops. For the audience, an entire hillside was covered with benches made out of split logs. It was a gigantic effort, worthy of the importance that the campesinos of Chiapas felt they had attained, and it took Army troops less than a week to dismantle the entire compound, log by log.

When I arrived at the site last week, government soldiers were planting the last of several hundred saplings in the holes where Y-posts had once held the benches of the amphitheatre on the hill. I asked the colonel in charge of the operation why the government had felt that it was necessary to return Aguascalientes to the jungle. "I think that in Mexico the era calls for more wooded spaces," he said, explaining the issue ecologically. "The problem is that anyone can think of cutting down a tree, but no one thinks of planting one back."

I asked him why the troops seemed so relaxed, as if they had no fear of an enemy attack. "You're the one who says there are Zapatistas," he answered. "I've been stationed in the region eight months and I haven't seen one yet."

It took an hour to travel about ten miles down a gutted road from the nearest town to another village in the region. The campesinos there had taken to the hills when they heard of the Army's approach, abandoning their yard animals and their supplies of corn, but days later, figuring that if they didn't reclaim their homes the Army would take them over, they had returned. Since then, they had not dared to leave the village to work their fields. Yet the radical fury of their discourse, their innocence of the world, their stubborn hope that the Zapatistas might yet manage to terrify the government into giving them a place in the world, was startling. "We don't know what the government looks like, where it sits, or what its palace is like," a woman said, in broken Spanish. She was choking with rage. "We are ignorant, but what I want to know is this: Do the bourgeois, the rich people's children, sleep on the floor, the way ours do? Do helicopters come and terrify them?"

"Let the government take its helicopters, tanks, and cars out of here," a man said, "because everyone knows that the Zapatistas aren't just a handful, so if it doesn't they will take revenge. Is it a crime to want what they want? We want justice, liberty, and democracy." And he added, with no apparent sense that one wish was infinitely smaller than the other, "We want the government to take us into account."

I told him that Aguascalientes was no more, and other villagers came close to hear the news.

"They didn't have to carry the logs to build it," the man said quietly. "Was it so much in their way that they had to destroy it?" ♦

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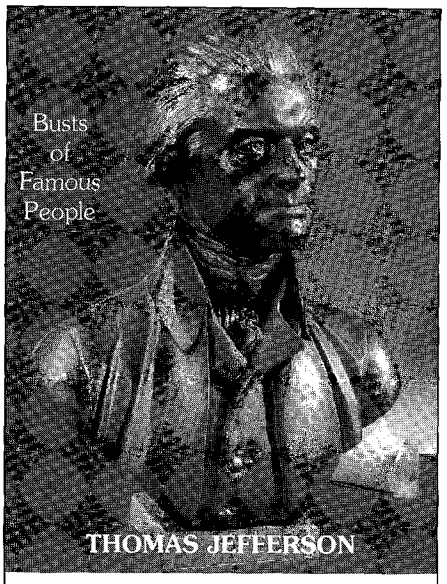

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SHAKE THEM BONES

What should the Museum of Natural History of the millennium be? Not just a charming relic, according to Ellen Futter, its brave new president.

BY JAMES TRAUB

When Holden Caulfield needed shelter from the world, he fled to the great, silent spaces of the American Museum of Natural History. Remember Salinger's elegy to its humble virtues?

> The best thing . . . in that museum was that everything always stayed right where it was. Nobody'd move. You could go there a hundred thousand times, and that Eskimo would still be just finished catching those two fish, the birds would still be on their way south, the deers would still be drinking out of that water hole. . . . The only thing that would be different would be *you*.

The Eskimos, the birds, and the deer—or, at least, the oryxes and the gazelles—still strike their iconic poses, and the Museum of Natural History still satisfies our atavistic yen for the uncorrupted, untouched thing. Some of the labels are so eroded that you can't even tell what shark you're looking at. Others conjure up a lost world of prim rectitude or imperial glory: "The American People are indebted for these life-like groups of South Asiatic Mammals to Mr. Arthur S. Vernay and the late Colonel J. C. Faunthorpe of Great Britain." When New Yorkers profess love for the Museum of Natural History—and an amazing number do—it is a sentimental, Proustian sort of feeling, as if the museum recalled the best, vanished parts of themselves. And it's not only the persistence of the archaic that evokes nostalgia. The museum, with its bottomless collection of oddities, gimcracks, and marvels, beautiful and dreadful, speaks above all to our sense of wonder, our childlike delight in the sheer variousness and strangeness of things. Norman Newell, a museum paleontologist, once said, "We are gradually getting over our repugnance of the idea that this is a children's museum. I really believe it *is* a children's museum, and that only the children—and perhaps the parents who bring them—appreciate it."

But the Museum of Natural History has had it with naïve charm, stuffed Eskimos, delighted children, and bored parents. A little more than a year ago, the trustees hired as its president Ellen Futter, the forty-five-year-old former president of Barnard College, which she was generally credited with rescuing from a threatened state of genteel irrelevance. Futter has a genius for what is known in the business world as positioning; and she is quite consciously positioning her institution for a return to a long-forgotten preëminence. She has used the museum's hundred-and-twenty-fifth birthday, this year, as a pretext for launching a barrage of events—glamorous, public-spirited, lofty, and, in some cases, just attention-getting. She has asked her curators to think "strategically" about exhibitions that can reach a wider audience, and about taking the museum "beyond the walls" to classrooms and the general public. And she has initiated ambitious plans to turn the Hayden Planetarium, now a nostalgia piece from the Flash Gordon era, into a high-tech astronomy exhibit. Futter has proceeded with some care, but she calls herself Mrs. Impatience, and with good reason. By the millennium (a date that she bandies about with a certain blithe nonchalance), the museum is likely to be a profoundly different place from the one the public has known for the last half century or so—the kind of place, in short, where Holden Caulfield would not feel at home.

Now that the Museum of Natural History is trying to capitalize on public interest in issues like biodiversity and extinction, it might want to consider a Hall of WASPS: the museum's own fortunes have had a good deal to do with the flourishing and the petering out of the species. The museum was founded by some of the great financiers and industrialists and grandees of the Gilded Age—J. Pierpont Morgan, Morris K.

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Jesup, Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., and assorted Whitneys, Rockefellers, Phelpses, and Dodges. Over the years, they made up the museum's deficits, financed its stupendous expeditions, and signed over their vast collections of mammal bones, stuffed birds, and gems. They also turned the museum into a formidable redoubt of ruling-class values. The museum's towering figure, Henry Fairfield Osborn, who was its president from 1908 to 1933, was Morgan's nephew, the scion of a railroad family, and the epitome, as a contemporary described him, of "Hudson River Bracketed." And, as the WASP order waned elsewhere, the museum became a sort of island culture of old money. Board positions were handed down from one generation to the next. After a good deal of internal debate, a Jewish seat was established in 1910, and was duly awarded to the Warburgs. The museum seemed dedicated not only to the geological but to the social past—a place where the dust was worshipped rather than purged.

In the nineteen-seventies and eighties, when other museums were learning, perhaps all too well, how to cater to a mass public, the museum clung to its dowdy respectability and its faith in tradition. While the Metropolitan Museum of Art was mounting blockbusters, the Museum of Natural History only rarely organized original shows, and never stooped to the vulgarity of advertising or of coddling the press. The museum was run by Tom Nicholson, a forbidding, if highly able, astronomer. During his twenty years in office, Nicholson tripled the museum's endowment, to a hundred and fifty million dollars; doubled its research staff; and added eight permanent halls. But he was also a man who prided himself on his parsimony. When Craig Morris, an anthropologist who is now the museum's dean of science, organized the Andean section of the Hall of South American Peoples, in 1989, he proposed installing video screens to demonstrate the innumerable weaving patterns used in ancient textiles; Nicholson refused. Morris offered to raise the money through a grant, but Nicholson refused again—the upkeep would be too expensive. Morris had to make do with a little cluster of knots mounted on a wall. It looks more like a science project than a museum display.

Nicholson has a few defenders at the museum, but others regard him as a late apparition from a defunct line. "He kind of personified the white-male stuff," Melanie Stiassny, an ichthyologist, says. By the time Nicholson retired, in 1989, the more active members of the board—the ones who hadn't received their seats by immemorial right—were desperate for change. The halls were dark, the dust was thick, the Central Park West perimeter wall was covered with graffiti. "The museum was incredibly isolated," one member, Lewis Bernard, says, "and it was very much under this dead hand for a long time. It had a sufficient endowment that it could always muddle along; it would just never be great." And there, across the Park, was the grand and glorious Metropolitan Museum. Douglas Preston, an administrator during the Nicholson era and the author of an engaging history of the museum, "Dinosaurs in the Attic," recalls board meetings where the trustees would moon over their flourishing neighbor: "They'd say, 'God damn it, why can't we have people in the halls, like the Met, where they're beautifully dressed, and they have such nice parties and committees that everyone wants to be on.' "

Futter wants to take her curators' powerful scientific knowledge out of the back hallways and into the public precincts, to create a "museum without walls."

KELYNN Z. ALDER

The trustees decided to eliminate the archaic system whereby power was shared between a scientist who served as the director and an unpaid gentleman who served as the president. They agreed to hire a professional president and to transfer to that position many of the responsibilities of the director. The search, in the museum's usual dilatory fashion, took well over a year. After two candidates turned down the job—perhaps they didn't relish the prospect of trying to jolt the museum from its slumber—the board finally found someone it could live with who wanted the position: George Langdon, Jr., the president of Colgate University.

Langdon, who was fifty-five when he was appointed the museum's president, was a more or less modern man deposited in the midst of a nineteenth-century institution. He brought with him such newfangled ideas as financial plans and development research. He raised money from the board and spent it on a new library, on air-conditioning, and on the first stages of the museum's fourth-floor fossil halls. He talked about "issues," like environmentalism, and pushed the museum into an exhibit on global warming. Nevertheless, Langdon may have been

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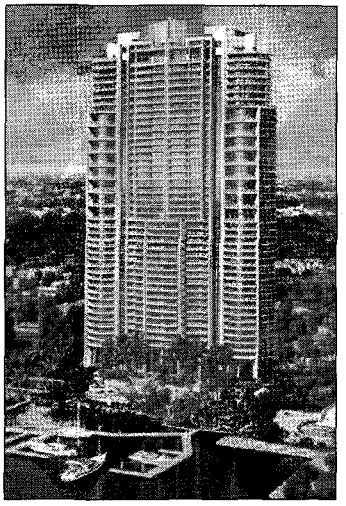

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somewhat intimidated by the museum's past, by its majestic self-regard. He made little attempt to rally its latent energies. William Golden, a former chairman of the board, says, "George did start us on a path of modernization. But he came down from a freshwater pond into a saltwater ocean. He didn't know the local scene. And he didn't find it easy to adapt." A former board member takes a less nuanced view. "Langdon had negative charisma," he says. "After you talked to him, you felt *deprived* of knowledge."

Langdon had a five-year contract, and the board expressed little interest in renewing it. The board thought seriously about hiring a prominent scientist, someone who would represent the museum's values to the larger world, and a search committee talked to Thomas Lovejoy, an authority on the Amazonian rain forest, and to the botanist Peter Raven. Then the committee met Ellen Futter, who had no background in science and was a lawyer rather than an academic, and the search came to an end. "She did an extraordinarily impressive job setting forth a sense of herself, a sense of mission for the museum, a sense of what the museum is about," one trustee, Boker Doyle, says. "Every trustee in that room just felt, This is a fabulous person." Doyle and others say that they were struck by Futter's long-range vision, her poise, and her extensive contacts in the worlds of politics, business, and foundations. After thirteen years at Barnard, Futter was a celebrity in her own right; the mere act of hiring her would be seen as a decisive lifting of the dead hand.

Futter might well have chosen a less cobwebbed purlieu. She was on the shortlist for several major jobs, including the presidency of the New York Public Library, and some of her friends had urged her to pursue it. Vartan Gregorian had turned the library into one of New York's dazzling and desirable institutions. And that, she explained to one of her friends, was precisely why she *wouldn't* pursue the job: the library had already been transformed, while the museum was potential waiting to be activated. "It was like blazing letters before her," the friend says. Futter agrees that the museum, like Barnard, had the appeal of a sound institution that "needed animating." Certainly the curators who were asked to speak with her as part of the interview process understood that Futter was not just another supplicant. Dave Thomas, a curator of anthropology, says that after he and a colleague asked Futter about her plans "she turned the interview around and she interviewed us. It was very impressive to see. I got the impression that she was interviewing the entire museum. She has a trajectory that I don't think anybody's projected the end point of. She wanted to be sure that if she linked up with this institution it had the potential for the greatness she wanted to build."

ELLEN FUTTER is a small woman with a round, pixieish face and short brown hair. She typically wears dark suits of the sort that are designed not to be noticed. Futter has a strikingly low voice and a rat-a-tat-tat speaking style. She often nods sharply in the middle of a question—she's got the point, she's ready with the answer. Sometimes she speeds up the process by asking herself the question, and then answering it. "I'll do the interview for you," she told me at one point. People sometimes report symptoms of exhaustion after prolonged exposure to Futter. She's indefatigable and relentlessly upbeat, and she has a gift for reconfiguring everything into a momentous issue. This makes her, for all her vital presence, oddly abstract. The curators at the museum seem rooted in the facticity of bones and bugs and birds, in the minute particularity of their research. They talk about things; Futter talks about processes and plans. At one point during our conversations, she mentioned that the museum has three parts—exhibition, education, and research. "The part of the challenge that I really resonate to," she said, "is to take those three parts and make sure that they are not engaged in what those of us who have small children understand when I characterize it as parallel play."

Futter is a classic instance of the institutional or bureaucratic personality. She has no field of her own; she cannot speak persuasively about science, as Vartan Gregorian, for example, could about literature or intellectual history. Futter is a crisp analytic thinker with a gift for orchestration. She appears immensely confident but not at all overweening—a person with no demons or dark corners. Nothing bad seems to have ever happened to her. Ellen Futter grew up in a

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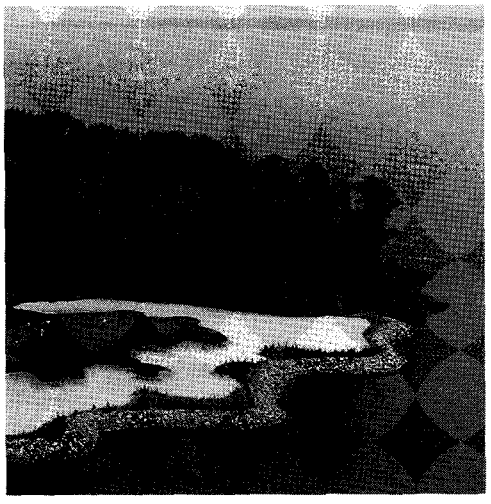

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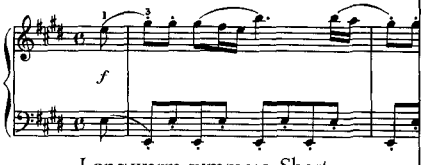

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secular Jewish family in the Long Island suburb of Port Washington. Her father was a lawyer with the firm of Sullivan & Cromwell and later a corporate executive; her mother was a librarian who went back to school for a master's degree at age forty. Ellen was the captain of the high-school tennis team; she played basketball and field hockey. Her younger sister, Deb, who is the editorial director of Doubleday, says, "Sports are a very, very defining thing for her." She attributes Ellen's confidence, her belief in teamwork, and her feel for the difference between "healthy competition and petty competition" to her experience as a jock.

Futter spent two years at the University of Wisconsin and then transferred to Barnard, where she majored in English. It was 1970, when either the revolution or the apocalypse seemed to be pending, but Futter wanted to run the institution, not torch it. She sought and won the position of student representative to the board. Upon graduating, she went off to law school at Columbia, joined the exceedingly Waspy firm of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy, and remained on the Barnard board. In 1980, when the board abruptly fired the college's president, Futter agreed to serve as acting president. She was two months shy of her thirty-first birthday, and hadn't even made partner yet. "I don't think a person on that board thought she would end up being president," one board member says. But the college, unable to find a satisfactory replacement, in the end turned to Futter.

"I think she was preternaturally mature," says the writer Anna Quindlen, who has known Futter since college. "She could have been president when she was twenty-one." Futter understood that many members of the faculty were less than pleased to be led by a lawyer with no academic background. Rather than try to impress them with her expertise, she won them over, according to Barbara Schmitter, then the vice-president for student affairs, "by listening very hard, which was perhaps contrary to her nature." Futter managed to be decisive without being either impetuous or imperious. When I asked her what she felt she had learned during her years at Barnard, she said, "I developed a keen appreciation for process, a real understanding of the importance of the culture of the institution, of community—that these institutions are delicate. It's more than a sense of being careful; it's being true to the institutional values. Issuing edicts can make certain things happen, but it won't necessarily make them happen optimally or effectively."

Futter made several choices that turned out to be critical. She insisted that Barnard build an additional dormitory on its tiny, four-acre plot of the Upper West Side, in order to be a hundred per cent residential—a "breaking-out-of-the-box decision," in Futter's corporate lingo. The dormitory, and Futter's success in raising money for it, amounted to a tangible sign of the school's embrace of the future. Futter was like the football coach who hypnotizes the team into thinking that it can win no matter what the odds. She somehow managed to present the revised "intercorporate agreement" with Columbia, which permitted the college to admit women, as an opportunity rather than a death blow. Demetrios Caraley, the chairman of Barnard's political-science department, says, "Everyone feared that half the students would be gone" after the agreement. "We needed a cheerleader to say, 'No, that's not going to happen; it's going to be better than ever.' " Futter made herself into a leading spokesman for the cause of the women's college, which seemed beleaguered at the time. With two daughters (they are now thirteen and nine) and a husband, John Shutkin, who is an attorney at the accounting firm of KPMG Peat Marwick, Futter was herself a model of the modern woman. It is hard to think of a major-college president who did more for her institution than she did. Helene Kaplan, who was the board chairman during much of Futter's tenure, says, "She put Barnard on the map."

George Langdon had left the Mu-

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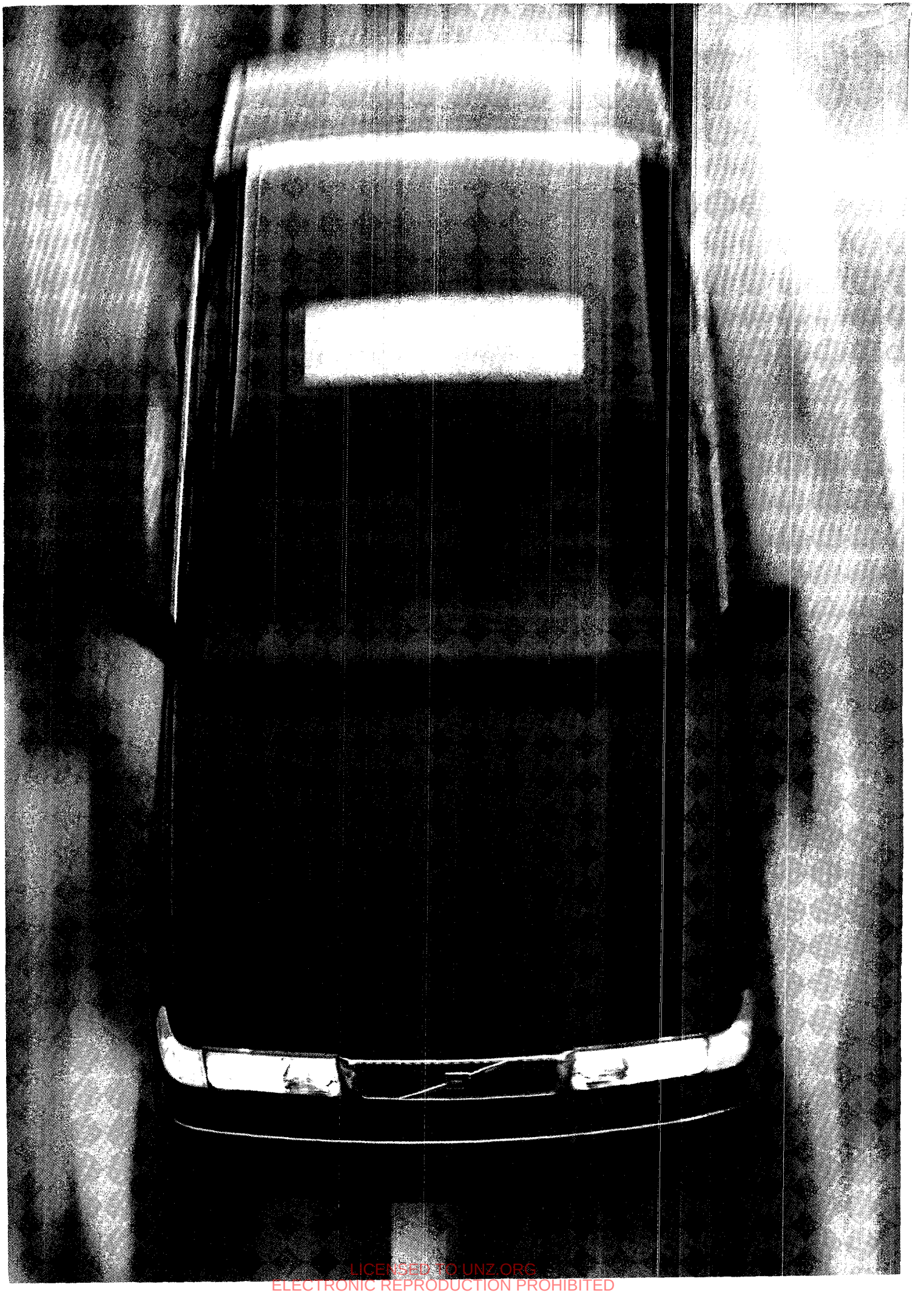

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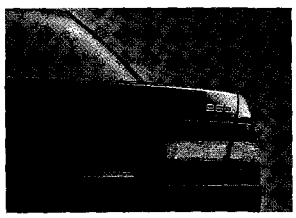

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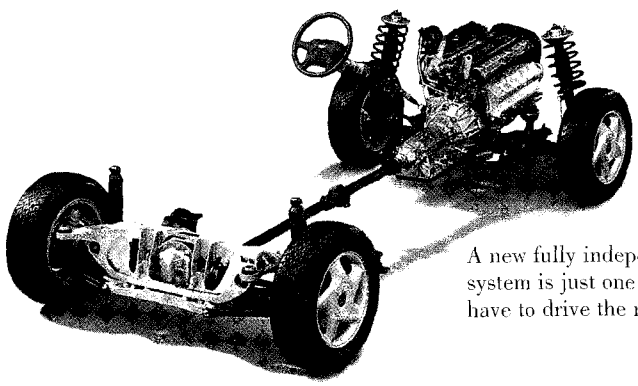

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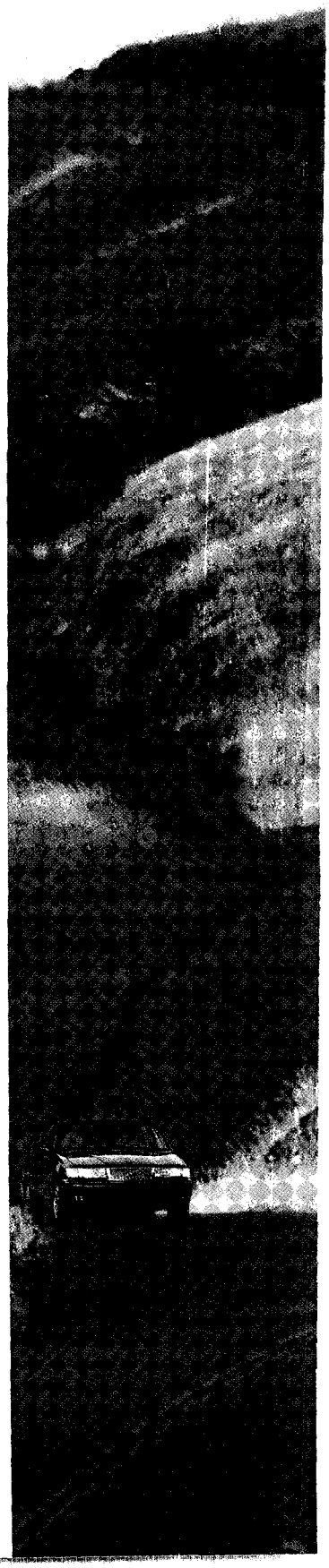

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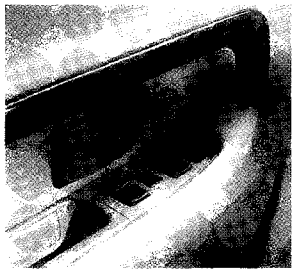

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seum of Natural History a fundamentally sound institution, which every year attracted almost three million visitors—half of them children—and whose endowment stood at two hundred and forty-one million dollars. He had brought the museum into the twentieth century; Futter's job was to prepare it for the millennium. For all her belief in consensus, Futter made it clear right away that she had come to turn on the lights. Sam Taylor, the director of exhibitions, says, "I remember the first day Ellen came, she called a meeting of the senior administrators. It wasn't 'How do you do?' It wasn't 'Pleased to meet you.' It was Ellen with a couple of sheets of paper in front of her, and it was 'O.K., here's the plan.' And it was boom-boom-boom-boom. It was a wake-up call." Futter wanted to talk about the hundred-and-twenty-fifth anniversary, a golden opportunity for marketing and repositioning that was about to pass unnoticed. She wanted to commission a survey of scientific literacy, to rethink the "visitor experience," to organize major conferences and splashy exhibitions. And she wanted to do these things right away.

At the same time, the museum could not simply recapture its old ground. In its days of glory, the curators had been heroic figures, trekking to the edges of the known world to retrieve curiosities and unearth fragments of the past. In the Hall of Asian Peoples you can still see a yellowed clipping from the *Times*, circa 1929, celebrating the discovery of Peking Man: " 'MISSING LINK' SEEN IN FIND NEAR PEKING; SCIENTISTS STIRRED." But the great mule-team expeditions came to an end with the Second World War and the close of the colonial era. Science went indoors; its dramas became interior. And the conquest of nature has become a source not of romance but of anxiety. Science is now an *issue*—something we need to know about. The survey that Futter commissioned revealed that Americans were "deeply concerned" about science and the natural environment (and deeply ignorant of them as well). With her love of process, her sense of the big theme, Futter recognized that this shift in attitude meant that the museum could recast itself in the public mind. By making the public more "scientifically literate," she says, the museum can "help create a more effectively functioning democracy, and thus a public that has a better sense of connectedness to each other, to cultures all over the world, to other species." That's a far grander ambition than showing how Eskimos catch fish. Whether it makes for a more pleasing museum experience is another question.

Everything that Futter has done is designed to cultivate a new image of the museum as an engaged, vital place. Last June, she organized a daylong festival in which museum educators conducted dinosaur digs on the museum's grounds and a hundred thousand visitors wandered through certifiably multicultural exhibits in the halls. In November, when the *Times* reported on its front page that a museum paleontologist, Mark Norell, had discovered the first fossil embryo of a carnivorous dinosaur, Mrs. Impatience turned on a dime. "The article hit the stands on a Friday," Futter recalls. "Friday morning at ten, I had everybody out there figuring out what we could do instantly for the public. That embryo, with an enlarged illustration and a video, was in the rotunda Saturday morning."

Futter talks of doing exhibits on AIDS and on endangered species. An initiative that she is especially excited about is a planning committee on exhibitions and education. She explained its role as follows: "We ask ourselves—we being curators—'What are the five or ten most important topics to bring to the public?' And then we can say to ourselves, 'Which of those lends itself to an exhibition? And, if it's an exhibition, is it permanent, or is it temporary? Or should it be a conference? It could be a series of lectures.' It's a way of thinking about public programming that is science-centered but nonetheless highly strategic." On March 9th and 10th, the museum will mount a major conference on biodiversity.

None of Futter's projects will rival the scope of the recently announced reconstruction of the Hayden Planetarium, which is expected to cost as much as ninety million dollars. That's a huge number for a museum, but Futter is a powerhouse fundraiser. She has already received $12.5 million in commitments, from an anonymous donor, a foundation, and the New York City Council.

The planetarium now bears almost no relation to the rest of the museum. The plans call for the construction of an adjacent Hall of Planet Earth, which is to serve as a physical as well as an intellectual bridge. The project also includes a garage, a new restaurant, a new shop, and a new entrance, on Columbus Avenue, thus firmly linking the museum with its Upper West Side neighborhood. "Ellen was the first one to see the possibility of tying together all these different projects," the plan's architect, James Polshek, says. Polshek proposes to extend the half dome of the planetarium to form a sphere, which will sit inside a glass cube—a strikingly fanciful and modernistic image for a museum whose architecture has until recently been so thoroughly retrograde. The surface of the sphere will be covered with a network of fibre-optic cables, so that, for example, an "astro-bulletin," relaying news from NASA, could be projected onto a mosaic of high-definition television screens. The programming could then be transmitted to schools and science centers around the city and the country, thus realizing Futter's dream of the "museum without walls." The planetarium is expected to be fully operational no later than the millennium, of course.

FUTTER thrills to the prospect of "the virtual museum." One afternoon in December, I sat in her office, a circular space in one of the museum's turrets, while two consultants hired by the museum talked about the market for educational products. This was just the kind of bureaucratic process that some veteran curators at the museum take as a sign of the decline of Western civilization. Only the day before, one of them had said to me, "Consultants are brought in at tremendous expense. We're the day help. Then they write up all kinds of garbage that we have to send back." Some of the Old Guard might well have flinched to hear the board member Lewis Bernard ask the consultants if they had been talking to game manufacturers like Sega or Nintendo. Futter wanted to know if they could speed it up. "This is not a longitudinal survey," she said—an ominous joke. Still, Futter made a point of turning to Craig Morris, the dean of science, to ask what kind of role he thought the curators would want. Morris promised collaboration, but added, "The staff is very insistent that the reputation be maintained."

Futter really does seem to understand

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where she can push without having the institution push back. In December, she added a new vice-president for business development, but at the same time she elevated Craig Morris to his current position. She has made it clear that the scientists don't have to join her crusade for relevance—you don't have to be a Futterite if you don't want to. Futter seems to have refuted the zero-sum assumption that progress can come only at the cost of some dearly held value.

Is there, then, nothing to fear from the brave new museum that Ellen Futter is conjuring into being? Perhaps the reflex of anxiety simply comes of the Caulfieldian wish for stillness, for one patch of turf where we can be sure of our footing. That's not a wish that the museum can grant without turning into a museum of itself, a cherished sepulchre. An unyielding reverence for tradition cannot be the core of any healthy institution. The soul of the museum resides in the *things* that Holden Caulfield gazed at. The museum is a great act of homage to nature, in all its profuseness, exoticism, and even tedious repetition. It is this indiscriminate embrace of reality, this Victorian heritage, that is threatened by Futterism. The danger is that, as the museum embraces its educational, public-policy mission, things will give way to concepts—or, rather, to devices with conceptual power, like computers—and that tactile reality will give way to virtual reality. There is a corollary danger: that people simply won't go to the museum for a dose of high-minded enlightenment.

Whatever the custodians of tradition may feel, Futter's own trustees, and the larger cultural community, are plainly impressed with the direction she has chosen for the museum. Arthur Gelb, the president of the New York Times Company Foundation and one of Futter's many friends in the foundation world, says, "She is doing for the museum what Vartan Gregorian did for the library. She will get major figures in all classes of cultural life and business life interested in the museum. I can see the Museum of Natural History on a Sunday having the same kind of crowd that the Met has."

NOBODY finds the idea of the museum as a rainy-day destination for seven-year-olds more galling than the museum's own scientists. They find it even more galling that, as Mark Norell, the paleontologist, says, "very few people realize that there's a research institution here." In fact, the museum's collections are the desiderata of rigorous science. The great anthropological collections, for example, owe much to Franz Boas, who became a curator exactly a hundred years ago, and to Margaret Mead, who wrote virtually all her books in a suite of rooms on the sixth floor of one of the turrets. At least from the time of Henry Fairfield Osborn, who was himself an esteemed paleontologist, the museum's research work has been of a very high calibre. Scientists associated with the museum have been largely responsible for the two or three most important advances in evolutionary theory of the last sixty years. In the thirties and forties, the paleontologist George Simpson, the ornithologist Ernst Mayr, and the geneticist Theodosius Dobzhansky developed a series of theories, known collectively as "the modern synthesis," which squared the Darwinian idea of natural selection with the later genetic understanding of the transmission of inherited characteristics. And in the early seventies Stephen Jay Gould and Niles Eldredge accounted for anomalies in the fossil record by arguing that evolution proceeded not steadily but sporadically—a theory known as "punctuated equilibria."

The Museum of Natural History is a great place to practice science. It pays its forty-three curators salaries that are commensurate with those at the élite universities, and, like them, offers the security of tenure. The anthropologist Dave Thomas, who, like virtually every male curator in the building under fifty, has a beard and wears bluejeans, says, "The curatorships are modelled on university professorships, but taken what we perceive to be one step further." The curators don't have to teach, and they don't really have to curate. If they want to spend eight months in the field, that's fine. And their research need not have anything to do with exhibits. Intellectual freedom is a sacred principle—"the museum's outstanding attribute," according to Ian Tattersall, another bearded anthropologist. He adds, "But it's also a fragile one."

I asked Tattersall whether museum administrators had ever tried to insist on more "relevant" research. "There's been some muttering," Tattersall said darkly. When? Tattersall stroked his beard and said, "As I recall, there was some muttering back in the fifties." Tattersall and others argue that it is their inviolable autonomy, combined with the sense of community which lets specialists profit from one another's expertise and encroach on one another's fields, that has led to the museum's extraordinary record of scientific achievement.

The curators appear to be among the world's most contented intellectuals. It's not only the working conditions; it's also the proximity to the museum's staggering collections. The museum seems to have more of everything than any other place—more hermit crabs and crypto-hermit crabs, more spiders and scorpions and termites, more fish skeletons and stuffed birds, and, of course, more dinosaur bones. Its collections of aesthetic objects, including ancient South American textiles and Tibetan devotional paintings and Chinese amber carvings, rival or exceed those of major art museums.

The scientists think of their proximity to the collections as a privilege of incalculable value. One afternoon, Joel Cracraft, an expert on birds of paradise, took me to the immense locker room of birds in the Whitney Building, part of the twenty-three-building complex that constitutes the museum. He opened a locker and pulled out an aluminum tray to show me birds of paradise with iridescent-blue backs and wings—the same tropical-lagoon, early-Technicolor hue I had seen on some male morpho butterflies that the entomologist Dave Grimaldi had dazzled me with a few days earlier. Another tray held all-black birds—until Cracraft ruffled their feathers to reveal green and orange highlights. The museum has between three and four thousand samples of birds of paradise; neither Cracraft nor anyone else has had a chance to study them all. As we were walking away, he remarked, "I'll never get over the mind boggle of this collection. You can wander through here late at night and just open up one of the trays and see what it tells you."

It seems almost incredible that an institution with so many gifted scholars and such inexhaustible collections can have acquired such a reputation for backwardness and naïveté. Yet the col-

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lections have served an almost exclusively academic purpose; and the ethos of academic freedom that has produced such an intellectual bounty has allowed the scientists to become completely disengaged from the exhibition halls. Thus the science has flourished while the museum proper has gathered dust, as if the divide between the two enterprises had the moral stature of the wall between church and state. Niles Eldredge, who is an invertebrate paleontologist, says that when he tried to rally the curators to defend evolutionism from fundamentalist attack, the answer he got was "It's none of our business."

This is, of course, what Futter means when she talks elliptically about "parallel play." George Langdon was unwilling to challenge the tradition of aloofness; Futter, however, has found a surprisingly responsive audience. Thanks to a generational shift a decade or so ago, the museum now has a new cadre of young scientists who would be dealing with public issues even without Futter. "Most of us are reasonably socially conscious, and we want our work to have a relevance," Melanie Stiassny told me. "Whenever something happens, you see these Yale and Harvard professors talking about the issue. And we could be talking about it in a much more thoughtful way." Two years before Futter came, Mike Novacek, a paleontologist who is also the museum's provost, began laying plans for a Biodiversity Center, which will focus on global threats to the survival of species. In 1997, the museum plans to open a new biodiversity exhibition, where visitors would be able to walk through interactive dioramas in which old-growth forests in the Pacific Northwest are suddenly levelled by clear-cutting.

ONE morning in mid-December, I met Ellen Futter beneath the towering cast of a Barosaurus skeleton in the Theodore Roosevelt Rotunda, which serves as the museum's main entrance. Futter had agreed to give me a tour of the museum. Our tour started at the mini-exhibit of the dinosaur embryo, which was displayed next to the Oviraptor eggs that the museum's dashing explorer Roy Chapman Andrews had unearthed in 1923. The exhibit was marked by a blue banner, while a huge banner advertising it hung outside. As

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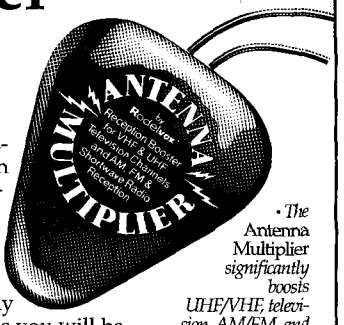

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we turned away, I asked about the Holiday Shop Express, sitting in one corner of the lobby. "Part of a quick-response mechanism," Futter explained as we sped off into the dark cathedral spaces of the Hall of African Mammals.

When it opened, in 1936, Akeley Hall, as it is also known, after the great African explorer Carl Akeley, astounded spectators with its naturalism and its exquisite sense of detail. Virtually nothing has been touched since. Akeley Hall embodies the museum's highest values—meticulousness, high-minded didacticism, and an almost religious reverence for nature. The gorilla group, which is shown on the slopes of Kivu Volcano, in what is now Zaire, is the sanctum sanctorum of the hall, and of the museum itself. In the center is a blackberry bush that took months to sculpt. A female gorilla at stage right has a stray bit of leaf hanging from her mouth. And the whole scene is lit with a diaphanous light that seems haunting against the darkness of the hall. It was to the gorilla group that Futter took me. We competed in praising its virtues. I realized that she had taken me there to convey her sensitivity to the museum's traditions, its holy mysteries. She would not, she promised, change anything in Akeley.

And then we scurried off to the Hall of Asian Mammals. The hall was closed, and a huge beige tent had been pitched in the middle. Futter explained that, as part of the hundred-and-twenty-fifth-birthday festivities, the museum would begin offering specially tailored "expeditions." The first, showcasing fifty "treasures," has now begun. Visitors arrive at the "base camp," in Asian Mammals, where museum employees hand out guidebooks marking the location of the various treasures, and portable CD-ROM players, for those who choose to rent them. The next room is an expedition shop. The CD-ROM players are activated by lasers in each gallery, so that visitors can wind their way through the halls in any order they choose.

As Futter was showing me one of the treasures (a diorama in the Hall of Asian Peoples), an elderly woman, overhearing us, said to her, "I was just shocked to come to the museum and find that I had to pay extra money to go to the 'Royal Tombs of Sipán' "—an exhibition of artifacts from the Moche culture of the Peruvian coast, which the museum had taken on loan. "It's very, very hard for a lot of senior citizens." Futter heard her out—barely—and then said, "But do you understand why we're doing it? We're helping the museum in Peru to be able to have that exhibit come back and be able to go all over the country." (Futter conceded later that the admission charge was also intended to defray the museum's own costs in mounting the show.) Now she was gathering steam. "Sorry—we try to make as much free as we can, including putting the embryo in the main part, where there's no charge." The woman couldn't get a word in edgewise. Futter maintained eye contact, backpedalling from the room as she kept up a volley of rationales. "Can't be helped—it's part of what we're doing here."

We walked down to the first floor, the museum's Tierra del Fuego. Only the hardiest visitor explores the circular hallways, whose dioramas show forest scenes. In their midst is an exhibit touting the virtues of clear-cutting in the great forests of the Pacific Northwest, which might require ideological rectification before the biodiversity exhibition is opened. Futter explained that a substantial portion of the first floor is slated for a drastic makeover, to be capped by the planetarium and the Hall of Planet Earth. As we were heading upstairs, I asked Futter if she had been much of a science kid herself. She was so ready for the question that she practically hit the ball out of my hand. "I collected rocks," she said. "I collected shells more. I'm deeply into shells; I have tables where I keep them. I am not a scientist, I'm very much a naturalist. I have a genuine and long-standing interest in many of these topics, having come to them at a young age."

We ended our tour at the new fossil mammal hall, on the fourth floor, which Futter seemed sincerely to adore. She pointed out murals of ancient beasts high up on the walls, and oohed over massive elk, miniature camels, and a skeleton of the extinct giant sloth known as *Glossotherium*, whose menacing posture looked strangely similar to an embrace. The fossil mammal hall is, in fact, the most crowded place in the museum, with the possible exception of the Diner Saurus, on the bottom floor. It is the one exhibition in the museum that has not only great things—from a two-hundred-and-eighty-million-year-old skeleton of the Dimetrodon, at one end, to the mammoths, with their great flaring tusks, at the other—but the didactic power of modern technology. Computer kiosks throughout the exhibition allow visitors not only to locate the adjacent skeletons on an evolutionary map but to delve as deeply, or as superficially, into the underlying science as they wish. Indeed, the exhibition itself has been laid out as an evolutionary map, according to the principles of cladistics, a theory of evolutionary development that tends to emphasize kinship across great chasms of time, and which has been propagated largely by the museum's own scientists. The fossil mammal hall has an almost epistemological character; one finds oneself, after a while, thinking cladistically.

The hall represents the first stage of a forty-four-million-dollar renovation of the fourth-floor fossil halls, which was begun under Langdon. In June, the museum will open two new dinosaur halls. A few days before my tour, I had been to a press briefing at which Futter described the dinosaur halls as "one of the most anticipated exhibitions in New York history." Even those New Yorkers who have not been counting the days are likely to be impressed and delighted by the new halls. For one thing, false ceilings have been stripped away, leaving the rooms white and lofty and light-filled. There are bones and teeth, and even skin imprints, for visitors to touch. The dinosaurs have been arranged in proper cladistic order. And the beasts themselves have been repositioned to reflect current understanding. The Tyrannosaurus rex, which since 1915 had stood upright on its mighty thighs, will now be seen in a stalking, almost running, pose, its tail parallel to the ground, true to its ancestral link with the birds. The Brontosaurus—or Apatosaurus, as it is now called—has its vast, serpentine tail lifted off the ground. At the press briefing, Mike Novacek said that visitors will no longer think of dinosaurs as "sluggish swamp creatures with small brains and uninteresting behaviors."

Ellen Futter, smiling slyly, said, "They are lean and lively, prepared for the millennium. And so is the Museum of Natural History." ♦

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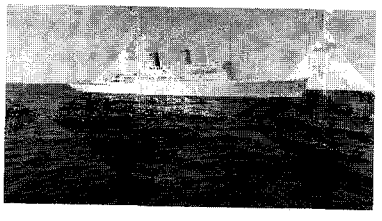

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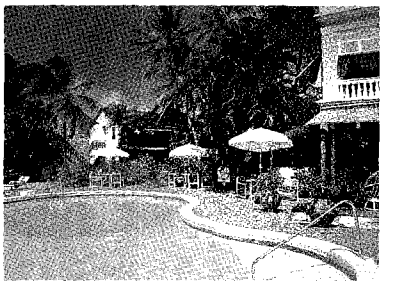

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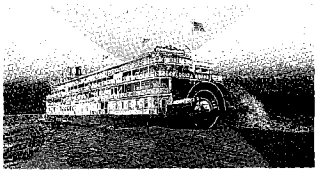

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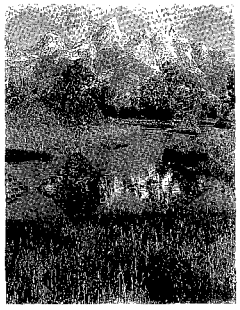

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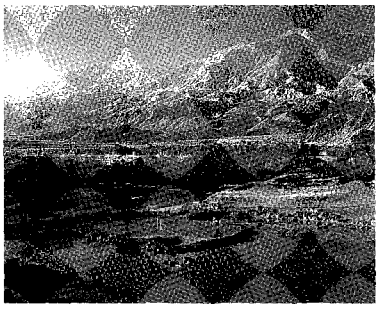

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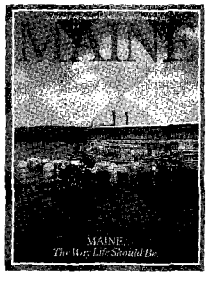

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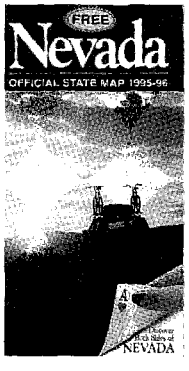

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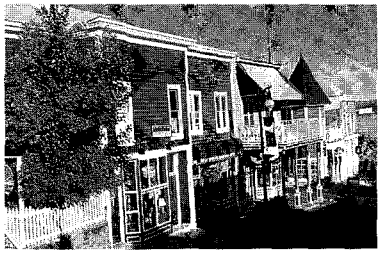

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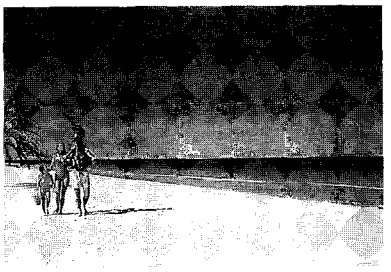

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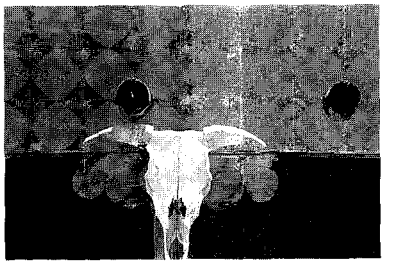

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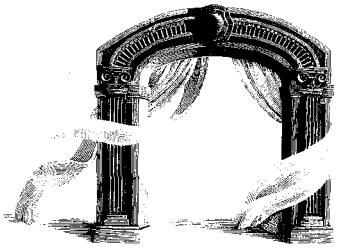

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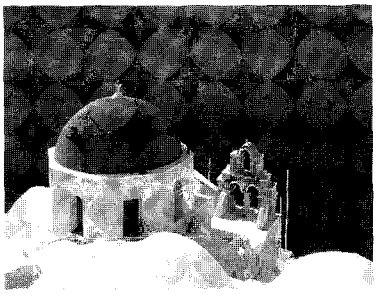

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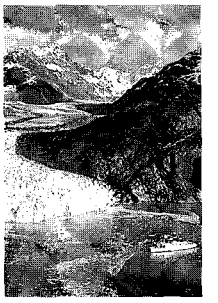

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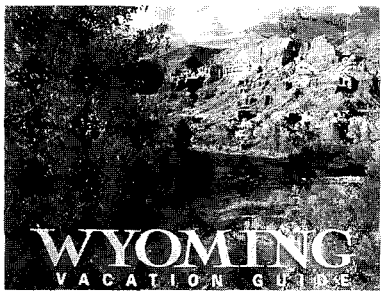

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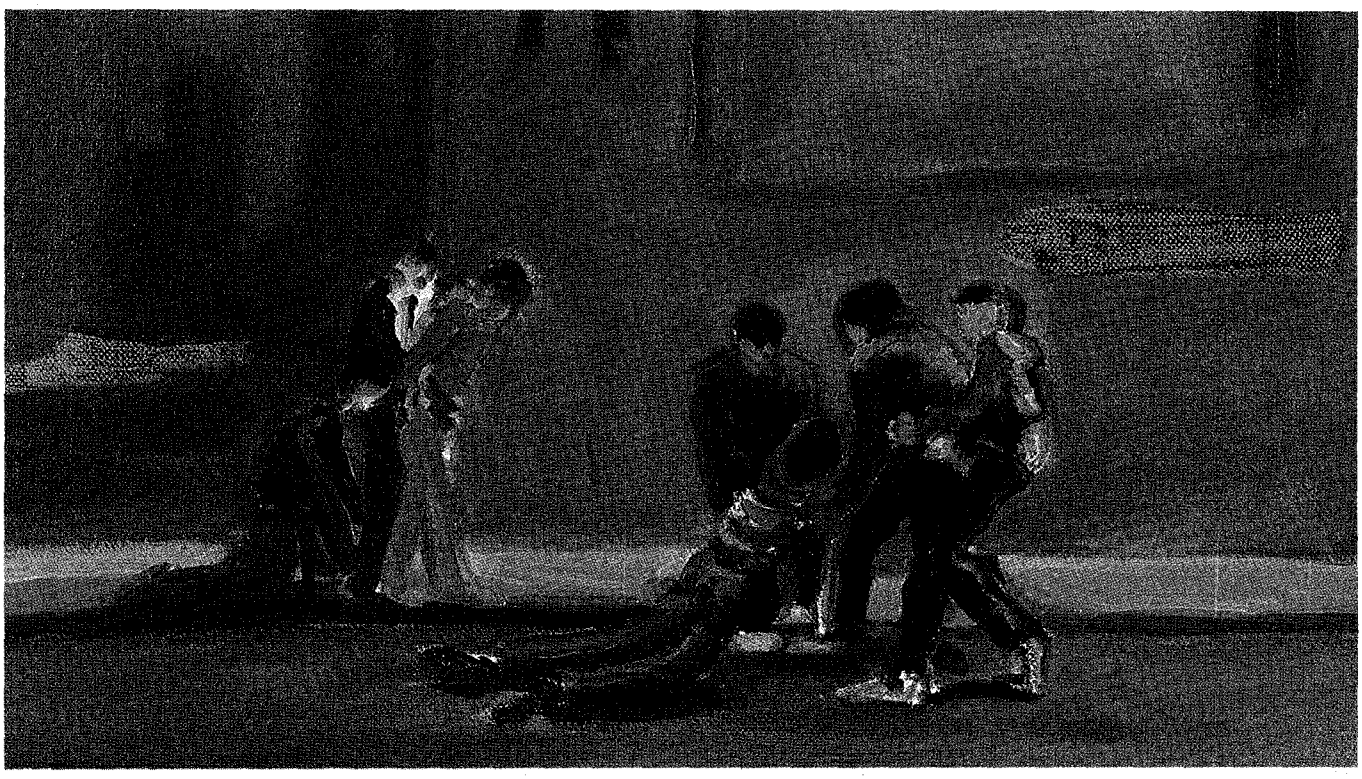

BRAVE NEW WORLD DEPT.

THE BIOLOGY OF VIOLENCE

Is inner-city violence a response to the social ravages of poverty, or a biochemical syndrome that may be remedied with drugs? Fallout from that debate derailed the Bush Administration's Violence Initiative, but a school of new Darwinians is proposing an answer that will unsettle both sides.

BY ROBERT WRIGHT

FREDERICK GOODWIN has learned a lot during a lifetime of studying human behavior, but no lesson is more memorable than the one driven home to him over the past three years: becoming known as someone who compares inner-city teen-agers to monkeys is not a ticket to smooth sailing in American public life. As of early 1992, Goodwin's career had followed a steady upward course. He had been the first scientist to demonstrate clinically the antidepressant effects of lithium, and had become known as a leading, if not the leading, expert on manic-depressive illness. He had risen to become head of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration, the top position for a psychiatrist in the federal government, and was poised to be the point man in a policy that the Bush Administration was proudly unveiling: the Federal Violence Initiative. The idea was to treat violence as a public-health problem—to identify violently inclined youth and provide therapy early, before they had killed. The initiative had the strong support of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Louis Sullivan, and Goodwin planned to make it his organization's main focus.

Then, in early 1992, while discussing the initiative before the National Mental Health Advisory Council, Goodwin made his fateful remarks. Speaking impromptu—and after a wholly sleepless night, he later said—he got off onto an extended riff about monkeys. In some monkey populations, he said, males kill other males and then, with the competition thus muted, proceed to copulate prolifically with females. These "hyperaggressive" males, he said, seem to be also "hypersexual." By a train of logic that was not entirely clear, he then arrived at the suggestion that "maybe it isn't just a careless use of the word when people call certain areas of certain cities jungles." Goodwin elaborated a bit on his obscure transition from monkeys to underclass males, but no matter; these few fragments are what came to form the standard paraphrase of his remarks. As the Los Angeles *Times* put it, Goodwin "made comparisons between inner-city youths and violent, oversexed monkeys who live in the wild."

As if a few seemingly racist quotes weren't enough of a public-relations bonanza for opponents of the Violence Initiative, Goodwin also injected what some took to be Hitlerian overtones. He

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talked about "genetic factors" inclining human beings toward violence, and suggested that one way to spot especially troublesome kids might be to look for "biological markers" of violent disposition. Within months, the Violence Initiative was abandoned, amid charges of racism. And Goodwin, facing the same charges, was reassigned to head the National Institute of Mental Health—not a huge demotion, but a conspicuous slap on the wrist. Finally, last year, he left that job for a position in academe after intermittent coolness from the Clinton Administration. Though no Clinton official ever told him he was a political liability, Goodwin found himself no longer invited to meetings he had once attended—meetings on violence, for example.

Goodwin is a victim of a vestigial feature of the American liberal mind: its undiscerning fear of the words "genetic" and "biological," and its wholesale hostility to Darwinian explanations of behavior. It turns out, believe it or not, that comparing violent inner-city males to monkeys isn't necessarily racist, or even necessarily right wing. On the contrary, a truly state-of-the-art comprehension of the comparison yields what is in many ways an archetypally liberal view of the "root causes" of urban violence. This comprehension comes via a young, hybrid academic discipline known as evolutionary psychology. Goodwin himself actually has little familiarity with the field, and doesn't realize how far to the left one can be dragged by a modern Darwinian view of the human mind. But he's closer to realizing it than the people whose outrage has altered his career.

As it happens, the nominally dead Federal Violence Initiative isn't really dead. Indeed, one of the few things Goodwin and his critics agree on is that its "life" and "death" have always been largely a question of labelling. Goodwin, who recently broke a thirty-month silence on the controversy, makes the point while dismissing the sinister aims attributed to the program. "They've made it sound like a cohesive new program that had some uniform direction to it and was directed by one person—namely, me," he told me. "The word 'initiative,' in bureaucratese, is simply a way of pulling stuff together to argue for budgets. In effect, that's what this was—a budget-formulation document, at Sullivan's request." Goodwin's critics look at the other side of the coin: just as the bulk of the Violence Initiative predated the name itself, the bulk of it survived the name's deletion. Thus the war against the violence initiative—lower case—must go on.

THE person who was most responsible for turning Goodwin's monkey remarks into a life-changing and policy-influencing event is a psychiatrist named Peter Breggin, the founder and executive director of the Center for the Study of Psychiatry, in Bethesda, Maryland, just outside Washington. The center doubles as Breggin's home, and the center's research director, Ginger Ross Breggin, doubles as Breggin's wife. (Goodwin says of Peter Breggin, in reference to the center's lack of distinct physical existence, "People who don't know any better think he's a legitimate person.") Both Breggins take some credit for Goodwin's recent departure from government. "We've been all over the man for three years," Ginger Breggin observes.

Goodwin and Peter Breggin interned together at SUNY Upstate Medical Center in the nineteen-sixties. Both took a course taught by Thomas Szasz, the author of "The Myth of Mental Illness," which held that much of psychiatry is merely an oppressive tool by which the powers that be label inconvenient behavior "deviant." Szasz had formed his world view back when the most common form of oppression was locking people up, and Breggin, since founding his center, in 1971, has carried this view into the age of psychopharmacology. He fought lithium, Goodwin's initial claim to fame. He fought the monoamine-oxidase inhibitors, a somewhat crude generation of antidepressants, and now he fights a younger, less crude generation of them. "Talking Back to Prozac," written in collaboration with his wife and published last June, is among the anti-psychopharmacology books he has recently churned out. So is "The War Against Children," published last fall, in which the Breggins attack Goodwin, the Violence Initiative, and also the drug Ritalin. In Breggin's view, giving Ritalin to "hyperactive" children is a way of regimenting spirited kids rather than according them the attention they need—just as giving "anti-aggression" drugs to inner-city kids would be an excuse for continued neglect. And Breggin is convinced that such drugs will be used in precisely this fashion if the Goodwins of the world get their way. This is the hidden agenda of the Violence Initiative, he says. And Goodwin concedes that pharmacological therapy was a likely outcome of the initiative.

Breggin's all-embracing opposition to psychopharmacology has earned him a reputation among psychiatrists as a "flat-earther." Some, indeed, go further in their disparagement, and Breggin is aware of this. "I am not a kook," he will tell a reporter whether or not the reporter has asked. People try to discredit him, Breggin says, because he is a threat to their interests—to the money made by drug companies, which insidiously bias research toward chemical therapy, and to the power of Goodwin and other "biological psychiatrists," who earn their status by "medicalizing" everything they see. "How is it that some spiritually passionate people become labeled schizophrenic and find themselves being treated as mental patients?" he asks in a 1991 book, "Toxic Psychiatry."

Breggin says he is struck by the parallels between the Violence Initiative and Nazi Germany: "the medicalization of social issues, the declaration that the victim of oppression, in this case the Jew, is in fact a genetically and biologically defective person, the mobilization of the state for eugenic purposes and biological purposes, the heavy use of psychiatry in the development of social-control programs." This is the sort of view that encouraged some members of the Congressional Black Caucus to demand that Goodwin be disciplined; it also helped get Breggin on Black Entertainment Television, and led to such headlines in black newspapers as "PLOT TO SEDATE BLACK YOUTH."

Breggin's scenario, the question of its truth aside, did have the rhetorical virtue of simple narrative form. ("He made a nice story of it," Goodwin says, in a tone not wholly devoid of admiration.) There has lately been much interest in, and much federally funded research into, the role that the neurotransmitter serotonin plays in violence. On average, people with low serotonin levels are more inclined toward impulsive violence than people with normal levels. Since Goodwin was a co-author of the first paper noting the correlation between serotonin and violence, he would seem to have a natural interest in this issue. And, since the "serotonin-reuptake inhibitors," such as Eli Lilly's Prozac, raise seroto-

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"Shall I cancel the Henderson meeting? You have walkies scheduled at three."

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nin levels, there would seem to exist a large financial incentive to identify low serotonin as the source of urban ills. Hence, from Breggin's vantage point it all fell into place—a confluence of corporate and personal interests that helped make serotonin the most talked-about biochemical in federal violence research. But, Breggin says, we musn't lose sight of its larger significance: serotonin is "just a code word for biological approaches."

It was in the late seventies that Goodwin and several colleagues stumbled on the connection between serotonin and violence, while studying servicemen who were being observed for possible psychiatric discharge. Since then, low serotonin has been found in other violent populations, such as children who torture animals, children who are unusually hostile toward their mothers, and people who score high for aggression on standardized tests. Lowering people's serotonin levels in a laboratory setting made them more inclined to give a person electrical shocks (or, at least, what experimenters deceived them into thinking were electrical shocks).

It isn't clear whether serotonin influences aggression per se or simply impulse control, since low serotonin correlates also with impulsive arson and with attempted suicide. But serotonin level does seem to be a rough predictor of misbehavior—a biological marker. In a study of twenty-nine children with "disruptive behavior disorders," serotonin level helped predict future aggression. And in a National Institutes of Health study of fifty-eight violent offenders and impulsive arsonists serotonin level, together with another biochemical index, predicted with eighty-four-per-cent accuracy whether they would commit crimes after leaving prison.

It doesn't take an overactive imagination to envision parole boards screening prisoners for biological markers before deciding their fate—just as Goodwin had suggested that using biological markers might help determine which children need antiviolence therapy. These are the kinds of scenarios that make Breggin worry about a world in which the government labels some people genetically deficient and treats them accordingly. In reply, Goodwin stresses that a "biological" marker needn't be a "genetic" one. Though N.I.H. studies suggest that some people's genes are conducive to low serotonin, environmental influences can also lower serotonin, and federal researchers are studying these. Thus a "biological" marker may be an "environmental" marker, not a "genetic" one. To this Breggin replies, "It's not what they believe, it's not in a million years what they really believe." This attempt to cast biological research as research into environment "shows their desperation, because this was never their argument until they got attacked," he says. "It's a political move."

In truth, federal researchers, including Goodwin, were looking into "environmental influences" on biochemistry well before being attacked by Breggin. Still, they do often employ a narrower notion of the term's meaning than Breggin would like. When Goodwin talks about such influences, he doesn't dwell on the sort of social forces that interest Breggin, such as poverty and bad schools. He says, for example, that he has looked into "data on head injuries, victims of abuse, poor prenatal nutrition, higher levels of lead," and so on.

In other words, he is inclined to view violence as an illness, whether it is the product of aberrant genes or of pathological—deeply unnatural—circumstances, or both. This is not surprising, given his line of work: he is a psychiatrist, a doctor; his job is to cure people, and people without pathologies don't need curing. "Once I learned that seventy-nine per cent of repeated violent offenses were by seven per cent of youth, it began to look to me like a clinical population, a population that had something wrong with it that resulted in this behavior," he says. Other federal researchers on violence tend to take the same approach. After all, most of them work at one of the National Institutes of Health, whether the National Institute of Mental Health, the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, or some other affiliate. For the Violence Initiative to be successful in the pragmatic aims that Goodwin acknowledges—as a way "to argue for budgets"

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for the Department of Health and Human Services—it pretty much had to define violence as a pathology, characteristic of inner-city kids who have something "wrong" with them.

Breggin would rather depict violence as the not very surprising reaction of normal people to oppressive circumstances. A big problem with biological views of behavior generally, he says, is that they so often bolster the medical notions of "deviance" and "pathology"—and thus divert attention from the need to change social conditions.

But "biological" views don't have to be "medical" views. This is where the field of evolutionary psychology enters the picture, and modern Darwinian thought begins to diverge from Goodwin's sketchier and more dated ideas about human evolution. Evolutionary psychologists share Goodwin's conviction that genes, neurotransmitters such as serotonin, and biology more generally are a valid route to explaining human behavior; and they share his belief in the relevance of studying nonhuman primates. Yet they are much more open than he is to the Bregginesque view that inner-city violence is a "natural" reaction to a particular social environment.

To most N.I.H. researchers, evolutionary psychology is terra incognita. Goodwin, for one, professes only vague awareness of the field. But the field offers something that should intrigue him: a theory about what serotonin is, in the deepest sense—why natural selection designed it to do the things it does. This theory would explain, for example, the effect that Prozac has on people. More to the point, this theory would explain the link that Goodwin himself discovered between low serotonin and violence.

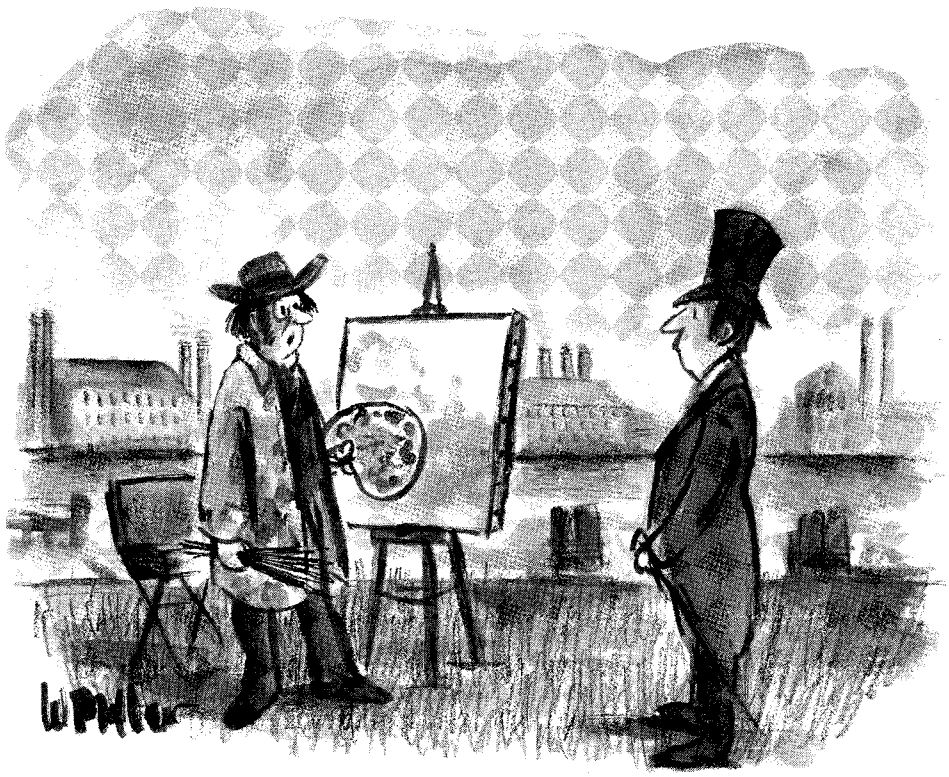
THE two acknowledged experts on human violence within evolutionary psychology are Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, of McMaster University, in Ontario. Their 1988 book, "Homicide," barely known outside Darwinian-social-science circles, is considered a classic within them. Listening to Margo Wilson talk about urban crime is like entering a time warp and finding yourself chatting with Huey Newton or Jane Fonda in 1969. "First of all, what's a crime?" she asks. It all depends on "who are the rule-makers, who's in power. We call it theft when somebody comes into your house and steals something, but we don't call it theft when we get ripped off by political agendas or big-business practices." And as for gang violence: "It's a coalition of males who are mutually supporting each other to serve their interests against some other coalition. How is that different from some international war?"

To hear this sort of flaming liberal rhetoric from a confirmed Darwinian should surprise not just Peter Breggin but anyone familiar with intellectual history. For much of this century, many people who took a Darwinian view of human behavior embraced the notorious ideology of social Darwinism. They emphatically did not view social deviance as some arbitrary and self-serving designation made by the ruling class; more likely, crime was a sign of "unfitness," of an innate inability to thrive legitimately. The "unfit" were best left to languish in jail, where they could not reproduce. And "unfit" would-be immigrants—those from, say, Eastern Europe, who were congenitally ill equipped to enrich American society—were best kept out of the country.

What permits Margo Wilson to sound a quite different theme is two distinguishing features of evolutionary psychology. First, evolutionary psychologists are not much interested in genetic differences, whether among individuals or among groups. The object of study is, rather, "species-typical mental adaptations"—also known as "human nature." A basic tenet of evolutionary psychologists is that there *is* such a thing as human nature—that people everywhere have fundamentally the same minds.

A second tenet of evolutionary psychologists is respect for the power of environment. The human mind, they say, has been designed to adjust to social circumstances. The vital difference between this and earlier forms of environmental determinism is the word "designed." Evolutionary psychologists believe that the developmental programs that convert social experience into personality were created by natural selection, which is to say that those programs lie in our genes. Thus, to think clearly about the influence of environment we must think about what sorts of influences would have been favored by natural selection.

If, for example, early social rejection makes people enduringly insecure, then we should ask whether this pattern of development might have had a genetic payoff during evolution. Maybe people



"I was rather hoping a Passaic River School might form, but so far it's just me."

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who faced such rejection saw their chances of survival and reproduction plummet unless they became more socially vigilant—neurotically attentive to nourishing their social ties. Thus genes that responded to rejection by instilling this neurotic vigilance, this insecurity, would have flourished. And eventually those genes could have spread through the species, becoming part of human nature.

These two themes—universal human nature and the power of environment—are related. It is belief in the power of environment—of family milieu, cultural milieu, social happenstance—that allows evolutionary psychologists to see great variation in human behavior, from person to person or from group to group, without reflexively concluding that the explanation lies in genetic variation. The explanation lies in the genes, to be sure. Where else could a program for psychological development ultimately reside? But it doesn't necessarily lie in differences among different people's genes.

This is the perspective that Martin Daly and Margo Wilson bring to the subject of violence. They think about genes in order to understand the role of environment. And one result of this outlook is agreement with Peter Breggin that inner-city violence shouldn't be labelled a "pathology." In a paper published last year Daly and Wilson wrote, "Violence is abhorrent. . . . Violence is so aversive that merely witnessing an instance can be literally sickening. . . ." There is thus "but a short leap to the metaphorical characterization of violence itself as a sort of 'sickness' or 'dysfunction.' " But, they insisted, this leap is ill advised. Violence is eminently functional—something that people are designed to do.

Especially men. From an evolutionary point of view, the leading cause of violence is maleness. "Men have evolved the morphological, physiological and psychological means to be effective users of violence," Daly and Wilson wrote. The reason, according to modern evolutionary thought, is simple. Because a female can reproduce only once a year, whereas a male can reproduce many times a year, females are the scarcer sexual resource. During evolution, males have competed over this resource, with the winners impregnating more than their share of women and the losers impregnating few or none. As always with natural selection, we're left with the genes of the winners—in this case, genes inclining males toward fierce combat. One reflection of this history is that men are larger and stronger than women. Such "sexual dimorphism" is seen in many species, and biologists consider it a rough index of the intensity of male sexual competition.

To say that during evolution men have fought over women isn't to say that they've always fought directly over women, with the winner of a bout walking over and claiming his nubile trophy. Rather, human beings are somewhat like our nearest relatives, the chimpanzees: males compete for status, and status brings access to females. Hence skills conducive to successful status competition would have a "selective advantage"—would be favored by natural selection. As Daly and Wilson have put it, "if status has persistently contributed to reproductive success, and a capacity for controlled violence has regularly contributed to status, then the selective advantage of violent skills cannot be gainsaid."

It's easy to find anecdotal evidence that status has indeed tended to boost the reproductive success of males. (It was Henry Kissinger who said that power is an aphrodisiac, and Representative Pat Schroeder who observed that a middle-aged congresswoman doesn't exert the same animal magnetism on the opposite sex that a middle-aged congressman does.) But more telling is evidence drawn from hunter-gatherer societies, the closest thing to real-life examples of the pre-agrarian social context for which the human mind was designed. Among the Ache of Paraguay, high-status men have more extramarital affairs and more illegitimate children than low-status men. Among the Aka Pygmies of central Africa, an informal leader known as a *kombeti* gets more wives and offspring than the average Aka. And so on. The Aka, the Ache, and Henry Kissinger all demonstrate that violence against other men is hardly the only means by which male status is sought. Being a good hunter is a primary route to status among the Ache, and being a wily social manipulator helps in all societies (even, it turns out, in chimp societies, where males climb the status ladder by forging "political" coalitions). Still, in all human societies questions of relative male status are sometimes settled through fighting. This form of settlement is, of course, more prevalent in some arenas than others—more in a bikers' bar than in the Russian Tea Room, more in the inner city than on the Upper East Side. But, as Daly and Wilson note, one theme holds true everywhere: men compete for status through the means locally available. If men in the Russian Tea Room don't assault one another, that's because assault isn't the route to status in the Russian Tea Room.

According to Daly and Wilson, a failure to see the importance of such circumstances is what leads well-heeled people to express patronizing shock that "trivial" arguments in barrooms and ghettos escalate to murder. In "Homicide" they wrote, "An implicit contrast is drawn between the foolishness of violent men and the more rational motives that move sensible people like ourselves. The combatants are in effect denigrated as creatures of some lower order of mental functioning, evidently governed by immediate stimuli rather than by foresightful contemplation." In truth, Daly and Wilson say, such combatants are typical of our species, as it has been observed around the world: "In most social milieus, a man's reputation depends in part upon the maintenance of a credible threat of violence." This fact is "obscured in modern mass society because the state has assumed a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. But wherever that monopoly is relaxed—whether in an entire society or in a neglected underclass—then the utility of that credible threat becomes apparent." In such an environment, "a seemingly minor affront is not merely a 'stimulus' to action, isolated in time and space. It must be understood within a larger social context of reputations, face, relative social status, and enduring relationships. Men are known by their fellows as . . . people whose word means action and people who are full of hot air."

That a basic purpose of violence is display—to convince peers that you will defend your status—helps explain an otherwise puzzling fact. As Daly and Wilson note, when men kill men whom they know, there is usually an audience. This doesn't seem to make sense—why murder someone in the presence of wit-

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nesses?—except in terms of evolutionary psychology. Violence is in large part a performance.

Thus the dismay often inspired by reports that a black teen-ager killed because he had been "dissed" is naïve. Nothing was more vital to the reproductive success of our male ancestors than respect, so there is nothing that the male mind will more feverishly seek to neutralize than disrespect. All men spend much of their lives doing exactly this; most are just lucky enough to live in a place where guns won't help them do it. These days, well-educated men do their status maintenance the way Goodwin and Breggin do it, by verbally defending their honor and verbally assailing the honor of their enemies. But back when duelling was in vogue even the most polished of men might occasionally try to kill one another.

THIS view from evolutionary psychology in some ways jibes with a rarely quoted point that Goodwin made during his rambling remarks on monkeys: that inner-city violence may be caused by a "loss of structure in society"; in an environment where violence is deemed legitimate, the male inclination for violence may reassert itself. Of monkeys, Goodwin had said, "that is the natural way of it for males, to knock each other off," and the implicit comparison was supposed to be with all human males, not just black ones; his point was that many black males now live in neighborhoods where social restraints have dissolved. This is the sense in which Goodwin says he meant to compare the inner cities to jungles, and the transcript of his remarks bears him out. His poor choice of imagery still haunts him. "If I had said that in the Wild West, where there was no structure, there was a hell of a lot of violence, no one would have noticed."

There is a crucial difference between this emphasis on social milieu as rendered by Goodwin and as rendered by evolutionary psychologists; namely, they don't abandon it when they start thinking about the interface between biology and environment. Whereas pondering this interface steers Goodwin's thoughts toward "pathology"—the biological effects of malnutrition, or brain damage due to child abuse—evolutionary psychologists try to figure out how normal,

"Marie, I think I've finished my novel!"

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everyday experience affects the biochemistry of violence.

Consider serotonin. In particular, consider an extensive study of serotonin in monkeys done by Michael McGuire, an evolutionary psychologist, and his colleagues at U.C.L.A. Vervet monkeys have a clear male social hierarchy: low-status males defer to high-status males over access to limited resources, including females. McGuire found that the highest-ranking monkeys in the male social hierarchy have the highest serotonin levels. What's more, the lower-ranking males tend to be more impulsively violent. Other studies have linked low serotonin to violence in monkeys even more directly.

At first glance, such findings might appear to be what Peter Breggin, and many liberals, would consider their worst nightmare. If this biochemical analogy between monkeys and human beings is indeed valid, the lesson would seem to be this: some individuals are born to be society's leaders, some are born to be its hoodlums; the chairman of I.B.M. was born with high serotonin, the urban gang member was born with low serotonin. And what if it turns out that blacks on average have less serotonin than whites do?

There certainly is evidence that some sort of analogy between the social lives of monkeys and human beings is in order. McGuire has found that officers of college fraternities have higher serotonin levels than the average frat-house resident, and that college athletes perceived as team leaders have higher levels than their average teammate. But grasping the import of the analogy requires delving into the details of McGuire's monkey research.

When McGuire examines a dominant male monkey before he becomes a dominant—before he climbs the social hierarchy by winning some key fights with other males—serotonin level is often unexceptional. It rises during his ascent, apparently in response to sometimes inconspicuous social cues. Indeed, his serotonin may begin to creep upward before he physically challenges any higher-ranking males; the initial rise may be caused by favorable attention from females (who play a larger role in shaping the male social hierarchy than was once appreciated). When, on the other hand, a dominant male suffers a loss of status, his serotonin level drops.

What's going on here? There is no way to look inside a monkey's mind and see how serotonin makes him feel. But there is evidence that in human beings high serotonin levels bring high self-esteem. Raising self-esteem is one effect of Prozac and other serotonin boosters, such as Zoloft. And, indeed, high-ranking monkeys—or, to take a species more closely related to us, high-ranking chimpanzees—tend to behave the way people with high self-esteem behave: with calm self-assurance; assertively, yes, but seldom violently. (This subtle distinction, as Peter Kramer notes in "Listening to Prozac," is also seen in human beings. Prozac may make them more socially assertive, but less irritable, less prone to spontaneous outbursts.) To be sure, an alpha-male chimp may periodically exhibit aggression—or, really, a kind of ritual mock-aggression—to remind everyone that he's the boss, but most alphas tend not to be as fidgety and perturbable as some lower-ranking apes, except when leadership is being contested.

All this suggests a hypothesis. Maybe one function of serotonin—in human and nonhuman primates—is to regulate self-esteem in accordance with social feedback; and maybe one function of self-esteem is, in turn, to help primates negotiate social hierarchies, climbing as high on the ladder as circumstance permits. Self-esteem (read serotonin) keeps rising as long as one encounters social success, and each step in this elevation inclines one to raise one's social sights a little higher. Variable self-esteem, then, is evolution's way of preparing us to reach and maintain whatever level of social status is realistic, given our various attributes (social skills, talent, etc.) and our milieu. High serotonin, in this view, isn't nature's way of destining people from birth for high status; it is

"But, in the end, you will become bored with that, too."

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nature's way of equipping any of us for high status should we find ourselves possessing it. The flip side of this hypothesis is that low self-esteem (and low serotonin) is evolution's way of equipping us for low status should our situation not be conducive to elevation.

This *doesn't* mean what an earlier generation of evolutionists would have thought: that Mother Nature wants people with low status to endure their fate patiently for "the greater good." Just the opposite. A founding insight of evolutionary psychology is that natural selection rarely designs things for the "good of the group." Any psychological inclinations that offer a way to cope with low status provide just that—a way to cope, a way to make the best of a bad situation. The purpose of low self-esteem isn't to bring submission for the sake of social order; more likely, its purpose is to discourage people from conspicuously challenging higher-status people who are, by virtue of their status, in a position to punish such insolence.

AND what about the antisocial tendencies, the impulsive behavior linked with low serotonin in both human beings and monkeys? How does evolutionary psychology explain them? This is where the demise of "good of the group" logic opens the way for especially intriguing theories. In particular: primates may be designed to respond to low status by "breaking the rules" when they can get away with it. The established social order isn't working in their favor, so they circumvent its strictures at every opportunity. Similarly, inner-city thugs may be functioning as "designed": their minds absorb environmental input reflecting their low socioeconomic standing and the absence of "legitimate" routes to social elevation, and incline their behavior in the appropriately criminal direction.

The trouble with breaking rules, of course, is the risk of getting caught and punished. But, as Daly and Wilson note by quoting Bob Dylan, "When you ain't got nothin', you got nothin' to lose." In the environment of our evolution, low status often signified that a male had had little or no reproductive success to date; for such a male, taking risks to raise status could make sense in Darwinian terms. In hunter-gatherer societies, Daly and Wilson write, "competition can sometimes be fiercest near the bottom of the scale, where the man on track for total [reproductive] failure has nothing to lose by the most dangerous competitive tactics, and may therefore throw caution to the winds." Even as low self-esteem keeps him from challenging dominant males, he may behave recklessly toward those closer to him on the social ladder. Thus may the biochemistry of low status, along with the attendant states of mind, encourage impulsive risk-taking.

This theory, at any rate, would help make sense of some long-unexplained data. Psychologists found several decades ago that artificially lowering people's self-esteem—by giving them false reports about scores on a personality test—makes them more likely to cheat in a subsequent game of cards. Such risky rule-breaking is just the sort of behavior that makes more sense for a low-status animal than for a high-status animal.

To say that serotonin level is heavily influenced by social experience isn't to say that a person's genetic idiosyncrasies aren't significant. But it is to say that they are at best half the story. There are not yet any definitive studies on the "heritability" of serotonin level—the amount of the variation among people that is explained by genetic difference. But the one study that has been done suggests that less than half the variation in the population studied came from genetic differences, and the rest from differences in environment. And even this estimate of heritability is probably misleadingly high. Presumably, self-esteem correlates with many other personal attributes, such as physique or facial attractiveness. Impressive people, after all, inspire the sort of feedback that raises self-esteem and serotonin. Since these attributes are themselves quite heritable—traceable largely to a person's distinctive genes—some of the "heritability" estimate for serotonin may reflect genes not for high serotonin per se but for good looks, great body, and so on. (The technical term for this oblique genetic effect is "reactive heritability.")

At least some of the variation in serotonin level is grounded more directly in genetic difference. N.I.H. researchers have identified a human gene that helps convert tryptophan, an amino acid found in some grains and fruits, into se-

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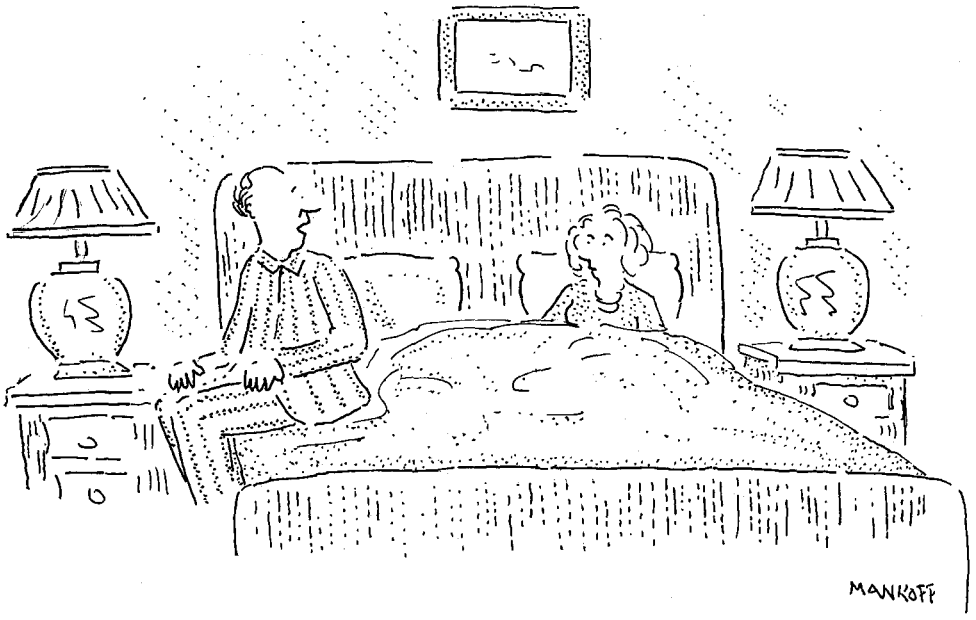

"I can't sleep. I just got this incredible craving for capital."

• •

rotonin, and they have found a version of the gene that yields low serotonin levels. Still, there is no reason to believe that different ethnic groups have different genetic endowments for serotonin. Indeed, even if it turned out that American blacks on average had lower serotonin than whites, there would be no cause to implicate genes. One would expect groups that find themselves shunted toward the bottom of the socioeconomic hierarchy to have low serotonin. That may be nature's way of preparing them to take risks and to evade the rules of the powers that be.

This Darwinian theory integrating serotonin, status, and impulsive violence remains meagrely tested and is no doubt oversimplified. One complicating factor is modern life. People in contemporary America are part of various social hierarchies. An inner-city gang leader may get great, serotonin-boosting respect ("juice," as the suggestive street slang calls it) from fellow gang members while also getting serotonin-sapping signs of disrespect when he walks into a tony jewelry store, or even when he turns on the TV and sees that wealthy, high-status males tend to bear no physical or cultural resemblance to him. The human mind was designed for a less ambiguous setting—a hunter-gatherer society, in which a young man's social reference points stay fairly constant from day to day. We don't yet know how the mind responds to a world of wildly clashing status cues.

Another hidden complexity in this Darwinian theory lies in the fact that serotonin does lots of things besides mediate self-esteem and impulsive aggression. Precisely what it does depends on the part of the brain it is affecting and the levels of other neurotransmitters. Over-all serotonin level is hardly the subtlest imaginable chemical index of a human being's mental state. Still, though we don't yet fathom the entire biochemistry of things like self-esteem, impulsiveness, and violence, there is little doubt among evolutionary psychologists that the subject is fathomable—and that it will get fathomed much faster if biomedical researchers, at N.I.H. and elsewhere, start thinking in Darwinian terms.

If evolutionary psychologists are right in even the broad contours of their outlook, then there is good news and bad news for both Frederick Goodwin and Peter Breggin. For Goodwin, the good news is that his infamous remarks were essentially on target: he was right to compare violent inner-city males—or any other violent human males—to nonhuman primates (though he exaggerated the incidence of actual murder among such primates). The bad news is that his Violence Initiative, in failing to pursue that insight, in clinging to the view of violence as pathology, was doomed to miss a large part of the picture; the bulk of inner-city violence will probably never be explained by reference to head injuries, poor nutrition, prenatal exposure to drugs, and bad genes. If violence is a public-health problem, it is so mainly in the sense that getting killed is bad for your health.

Evolutionary psychology depicts all kinds of things often thought to be "pathological" as "natural": unyielding hatred, mild depression, a tendency of men to treat women as their personal property. Some Darwinians even think that rape may in some sense be a "natural" response to certain circumstances. Of course, to call these things "natural" isn't to call them beyond self-control, or beyond the influence of punishment. And it certainly isn't to call them good. If anything, evolutionary psychology might be invoked on behalf of the doctrine of Original Sin: we are in some respects born bad, and redemption entails struggle against our nature.

Many people, including many social scientists and biomedical researchers, seem to have trouble with the idea of a conflict between nature and morality. "I think this is a source of resistance to evolutionary ways of thinking," says John Tooby, a professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, who along with his wife, Leda Cosmides, laid down some of the founding doctrines of evolutionary psychology. "There's a strong tendency to want to return to the romantic notion that the natural is the good." Indeed, "one modern basis for establishing morals is to try to ground them in the notion of sickness. Anything people don't like, they accuse the person doing it of being sick."

Thomas Szasz couldn't have said it better. Herein lies evolutionary psychology's good news for Peter Breggin: yes, it is indeed misleading to call most violence a pathology, a disorder. The bad news for Breggin is that, even though the causes of violence are broadly environmental, as he insists, they are nonetheless biological, because environmental forces are mediated biologically—in this case by, among other things, serotonin. Thus, a scientist can be a "biological determinist" or a "biological reductionist" without being a genetic determinist. He or she can say—as Daly

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MORNING AFTER A BLIZZARD

What could they possibly need to bury in heaven?
Imaginary playmates, secret lives
who wait their turn,
perhaps relieved to be going among their kind,
among the mortal necessities,
the wheelchairs, trusses, heaps of bifocals,
the huge corrective shoes,
until those foyers at the entrance resemble stations
in one of history's recurring dreams.
Some nights one hears a train approaching.
Who'll be assigned to dig the graves
in which each figure of despair lies down in an obscurity
so like these snowbanks, pine-splayed without
relief, pine-dappled here?
Even the shovel is transcription, a dream toy,
unless it scrapes the earth.
My mother says her death will defy gravity,
her body beyond its shadow rinsed of memory,
so white it seals the eyes, and all they've seen,
the rooms buried in which we sat,
a family always wrong year after year,
snowfall by snowfall,
the mother weeping, the father praying aloud,
each word out of his mouth
another cave furnished by shipwreck,
the children silent,
the daughters still in their nightgowns
dozing against each other or lost in the analogy,
lost, as partway through a wish that feels like distance,
Roman light, or sea glass, glint off the Atlantic
glimpsed from the air.
What could be monument toward this lightness?
Faith turned to stone?
This is what it was to be alive, saved.
This was love as we knew it.

—DEBORAH DIGGES

and Wilson and Tooby and Cosmides do—that human behavior is driven by biological forces impinging on the brain, yet can view those forces largely as a reflection of a person's distinctive environment.

This confronts Breggin with a major rhetorical complication. Much of his success in arousing opposition to the Violence Initiative lay in conveniently conflating the terms "biological" and "genetic." He does this habitually. In suggesting that the initiative grew out of Goodwin's long-standing designs, Breggin says he has Baltimore *Evening Sun* articles from 1984 in which "Goodwin is talking about crime and violence being genetic and biological." In truth, these articles show Goodwin saying nothing about genes—only that violence has some biological correlates and might respond to pharmacological treatment. In Breggin's mind, "genetic" and "biological" are joined at the waist.

That these terms are not, in fact, inseparable—that something utterly biological, like serotonin level, may differ between two people because of environmental, not genetic, differences—poses a second problem for Breggin. The best way to illuminate the environmental forces he stresses may be to study the biological underpinnings of behavior, and that is a prospect he loathes. If serotonin is one chemical that converts poverty and disrespect into impulsiveness or aggression or low self-esteem, then it, along with other chemicals, may be a handy index of all these things—something whose level can be monitored more precisely than the things themselves. (Studies finding that blacks on average don't suffer from low self-esteem are based on asking black people and white people how they feel about themselves—a dubious approach, since expressions of humility seem to be more highly valued in white suburban culture than in black urban culture.)

That Breggin may be wrong in the way he thinks about biology and behavior doesn't mean that the unsettling scenarios he envisions are far-fetched. The government may well try to use biochemical "markers" to select violently inclined kids for therapy, or to screen prisoners for parole. (Then again, if these chemicals aren't simple "genetic markers," but rather are summaries of the way genes and environment have together molded a person's state of mind, how are they different from a standard psychological evaluation, which summarizes the same thing?) There may also be attempts to treat violently inclined teen-agers with serotonin-boosting drugs, as Breggin fears. And, though some teen-agers might thus be helped into the mainstream economy, these drugs could also become a palliative, a way to keep the inner city tranquil without improving it. The brave new world of biochemical diagnosis and therapy is coming; and, for all the insight evolutionary psychology brings, it won't magically answer the difficult questions that will arise.

The point to bear in mind is simply that less eerie, more traditionally liberal prescriptions for urban violence continue to make sense after we've looked at black teen-agers as animals—which, after all, is what human beings are. The view from evolutionary psychology suggests that one way to reduce black violence would be to make the inner cities places where young men have nonviolent routes to social status and the means and motivation to follow them. Better-paying jobs, and better public schools, for example, wouldn't hurt. Oddly enough, thinking about genes from a Darwinian standpoint suggests that inner-city teen-agers are victims of their environment. ♦

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PROFILE

REALMS OF WONDER

There is an enduring otherworldliness about Stevie Wonder, who is releasing a new album for a new audience. But he is also one of the shrewdest businessmen in the industry.

BY GILES SMITH

STEVIE WONDER, at forty-four, is revered as the composer of a thick catalogue of pop songs, many of them hits; as the blind former child prodigy who became an international star; as one of the most gifted and influential vocalists of his generation; as a pianist both fluid and intricately rhythmical; as a virtuoso harmonica player; as a pioneering record producer, who was among the first musicians to exploit synthesizer technology; and as a generous investor in a broad portfolio of humanitarian causes. Among his colleagues, though, he is known, above all, as a major lateness expert. Wonder's capacity for delay, procrastination, dilatoriness, and all things tardy has been honed to perfection over his three and a half decades in show business. Some years ago, thirty minutes before Wonder was due to perform in Seattle, he phoned his tour manager to let him know that he was just setting out from home in Los Angeles. If you have spent any time around Wonder, it is not difficult to imagine his tone as he imparted this news: sublimely untroubled, low, soft, with slightly hazed consonants—the same tone he uses to utter his favorite catchphrase these days, which is "I'm just chillin'."

In the face of boring, day-to-day stuff like time and place, Wonder has repeatedly shown himself capable of an indifference bordering on the heroic. In London in 1981, he arrived at his own lunchtime press conference a striking six hours after it started, by which point the press had eaten all the sandwiches and gone home. He is late with records, too. Deadlines proposed by his record company, Motown Records, frequently fail to capture his imagination. In the mid-seventies, as completion dates came and went for the album "Songs in the Key of Life," which was eventually released in 1976, employees at Motown took to wearing T-shirts with the logo "Stevie's Nearly Ready."

His forthcoming album, "Conversation Peace," will be his first release in four years, but he's been working on it since 1987. (It will arrive in stores on March 21st.) It's a strong record, contemporary in feeling, and vigorously sung—his most spirited album since "Hotter Than July," which came out fifteen years ago. Motown is hoping that the new record will put Wonder back in people's minds, and back onto the pop charts, where he has been only an intermittent presence in recent years. Jheryl Busby, the president of Motown, told me not long ago that he believed "Conversation Peace" would "reposition" Wonder. He immediately added that this was a word Wonder himself would hate.

Stevie Wonder was at his most consistently busy as a recording artist in the sixties and early seventies. His voice, pumped up on what sounded like a limitless supply of optimism, blew a gale through Motown stompers such as "I Was Made to Love Her" and "Uptight (Everything's Alright)." Between 1972 and 1974, he released four groundbreaking albums in a row: "Music of My Mind," "Talking Book," "Innervisions," and "Fulfillingness' First Finale." He mastered a range of expression from the gently tumbling, middle-of-the-road ballad "You Are the Sunshine of My Life" to the ritzy syncopation of "Superstition" (the opening bars of which are as good a definition as any of the term "funky") while remaining credible as a voice of urban black anger on the sinuous and harrowing "Living for the City." And sometimes he was just plain euphoric: on the 1973 single "Don't You Worry 'Bout a Thing," Wonder seemed to be having about as much fun as you could have in a recording studio without getting arrested.

Although his career since 1976 has had its points of brilliance, it has been characterized, too, by a tantalizing absence of momentum. It should be made clear, however, that his three-to-four-year patches of downtime bear no relation to the lavish sabbaticals that other rock stars award themselves periodically for the purpose of shopping for real estate or getting their blood changed. Just as Stevie Wonder is almost never not late, so he is almost never not working. In his case, the cliché "Music is his life" reads like a potentially slanderous understatement. The singer Syreeta Wright, who married Wonder in 1971 and divorced him a year and a half later, recalls, "He would wake up and go straight to the keyboard. I knew and understood that his passion was music. That was really his No. 1 wife."

Wonder, who has four children (Aisha, Keita, Mumtaz, and Kwame) from three subsequent relationships, has never remarried. But wherever he travels his No. 1 wife is by his side, in the form of a synthesizer that hooks up to a computerized sequencer capable of making and playing back detailed multitrack recordings. On tour, for instance, an assistant will rig up this hardware in Wonder's hotel room (the job takes about ten minutes); then, at the appropriate time, the assistant will pack it up, transport it to Wonder's dressing room, and set it up there; and at the end of the evening he will take it down again and put it back up in the hotel room. This is so that inspiration, which cannot be relied upon to call during office hours alone, can be seized, as Syreeta Wright puts it, "when the heavens send." I have seen Wonder turn in earnest to his computerized sketch pad of drumbeats and chord patterns and licks of partly formed

ROBERT RISKO

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For Wonder, "time is altogether another type of trip," according to Syreeta Wright, his ex-wife.

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"If you saw a book with the title 'An American Speaks Out,' would you buy it?"

melody at various times and in various places, none of them predictable: directly before shows, directly after shows, in the morning while he was having his hair braided, and, most memorably, in the middle of a conversation we were having in a hotel room in Paris in 1993.

Even in the brief periods when he is nowhere near a keyboard, Wonder frequently seems to be mulling over music—sitting or standing with his head thrown back and his upper body weaving from side to side, and fooling with scraps of tune in a soft falsetto, locked into some internal rhythm. At these moments, he is absolutely unreachable. In January, in Phoenix, Arizona, he attended a press conference concerning, among other things, his support for the American Express-sponsored Charge Against Hunger campaign. At the conclusion, Wonder posed, grinning, for photographs. Immediately after that, in the hotel elevator, he was quietly singing, toying with the line "I just caught you smiling"—raw experience transformed into art in a little under twenty seconds. Maybe this melody will show up on his next album. Maybe it will never appear. Maybe it will appear somewhere in the next decade.

The way Wonder works, much goes unfinished but nothing is ever entirely discarded. He told me recently, "I have songs I wrote a long time ago and never finished. But at certain times I might think, This feels right for now, this feels good." He started writing "I Just Called to Say I Love You," his most saccharine and tonally simplistic composition, and his biggest hit, in the mid-seventies, but the song emerged only in 1984, as part of the soundtrack for the movie "The Woman in Red." (Nathan Watts, Wonder's longtime bassist and musical director, told me that when he heard an early version of the song he advised Wonder to "sell it for a commercial." In 1985, it won a Golden Globe Award and an Oscar. As recently as 1991, Wonder, disappointing me to the core, included it in a short list I asked him for of the recorded vocals he was most proud of.)

At Wonderland, the recording studio he owns on Western Avenue in Los Angeles, Wonder has been known to work for two and a half days without leaving the studio, while bleary-eyed engineers clocked in and out in shifts around him. The distinction between daytime and nighttime is not one that readily occurs to him, except as a lyrical trope. This indifference to the passage of time is frequently traced to his blindness. (Wonder was born prematurely, on May 13, 1950, and was probably blind at birth.) Most blind people manage to adjust themselves successfully to the clock by which the sighted world runs. Wonder is inclined to be a little looser, sleeping when he is tired, which may be in hours or half hours snatched in planes or limos. Or he may drop off during an interview for Italian television, as a Motown publicist told me he did in 1991. "Time is altogether another type of trip for him," Syreeta Wright says. She used to buy him watches but gave up after the third.

All of which must occasionally enrage the people who work for Wonder—those charged with shuffling his flights, rearranging his meetings, and generally scrapping and rebuilding and rescrapping and re-rebuilding his schedules. Chiefly, they appear to console themselves with the thought that Wonder's unreliability is both a consequence of and a testament to his genius, one of several signs that Stevie—or Steve, as those close to him call him—is not quite of this world.

In December and January, Wonder gave concerts in eleven cities across America. He played two synthesizer keyboards and a turquoise grand piano with a black silhouette of the African continent painted on its lid. Behind him on the stage were an impeccably drilled six-piece band and an all-female quartet called For Real on backup vocals, and ranged across the back of the stage was a thirty-three-piece orchestra, drafted locally for each performance. On January 16th, Martin Luther King Day, the Natural Wonder Tour arrived at the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, California.

True to form, Wonder, who was flying in from Los Angeles, showed up, direct from the airport, at 7:20 P.M., two hours and twenty minutes after the appointed sound-check time and only forty minutes before curtain time. As afternoon had worn into evening, it had been possible to detect in the theatre's echoey backstage passageways a low-voltage hum of anxiety among the band and the

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crew, twinned with a murmuring concern that, until Wonder arrived, this was a party without a host.

He was chauffeured to the stage door in a black stretch limo marginally shorter than a football field. The car stopped, and a full minute followed in which nothing happened. Finally, a rear door opened and Wonder eased himself out. He was wearing a flowing African robe, striped and patterned in mauve and ebony, and a matching boxy hat. His hair, hanging down to his shoulders, was gathered in thin braids that had small golden beads sewn into them. He was helped from the car and guided across the pavement through a small crowd of onlookers by his assistant, Edwin Birdsong, known as Bird, Birdman, or just Birdsong—a tall man wearing an ankle-length leather coat. Right inside the stage door, Birdsong called out, "Where's Stevie's dressing room?" Wonder, putting on the accent of a belligerent doorman, said, "He doesn't have one." (An amazingly high percentage of Wonder's casual remarks are made in accents—Southern twang, girlie squeak, drug-dealer mumble.)

At the top of a high, narrow stairwell, Birdsong and Wonder were met by the tour manager, Charlie Collins, who was the man responsible for getting the show in and out on time, and thus the person with the most to fear from Wonder's lateness. Collins and Wonder immediately went into a tension-dispersing routine that they seem to reserve for moments like this—an abrupt pantomime of mutual fury, involving much shouting at each other in fake Spanish. Collins jostled Wonder's stomach with his fists; Wonder jabbed Collins's chest and tapped his face with the tips of his fingers. This ended as suddenly as it had begun. Wonder now moved along the corridor, and met, coming the other way, Henry Panion, one of the show's musical arrangers and the conductor of the orchestra. Panion ordinarily wears jeans and a swivelled baseball cap, but he had already changed into his conductor's black tailcoat and bow tie. Panion said, "Wassup, Steve?" Stevie Wonder replied, "Yo, sweetie."

Wonder's dressing room was at the end of the corridor—a functional room painted an institutional pale brown and divided up the center by a long double-sided mirror-and-dressing-table unit. At one end of this, Birdsong set to work plugging in the keyboard and computer, which a crew member had brought up out of the limo's trunk. Farther along the table were a giant silver platter of fruit under cellophane, some cans of soda on ice in a gray plastic pail, a bowl of mints, and a plate of cookies. Wonder's makeup assistant, Val Williams, was laying out on a cloth a long silver vaporizer containing Asiatic Styrax, which Wonder uses onstage as a throat spray, and a small brown bag of root ginger from a herbalist in Los Angeles. Beside the keyboard, Birdsong set down a portable white plastic room humidifier, and it began to steam lightly.

As Greg Upshaw, the wardrobe assistant, was helping Wonder into his stage clothes, Wonder, still in a white undershirt, decided to break away and feel his way across the room to the keyboard. He tapped for a while at the computer, and the room flooded with sound: a drum machine ticking over at mid-tempo, a spindly synthesizer working through a pattern of neatly interleaving chords. As the track played, Wonder moved his hands over to the keyboard and switched through alternative sounds, trying them out. By now, the members of For Real, wearing black halter tops and brightly printed wrap skirts, had wandered in. They stood around Wonder, listening. Wonder coached them on a line for the chorus, which went, "Time plus time plus time." They sang the line with him, and then, as the chorus came around again, they began to break the line into harmonies. Wonder set the computer running once again, mapping out the verses with vocal noises—"nah-nah"s and "ay-ay"s—and then joining For Real in the choruses. This time, when the song ended, the women clapped and laughed. Charlie Collins, standing in the doorway with his arms folded, said, "It's time. Actually, it's past time. Let's go." Wonder stood up and allowed Greg Upshaw to finish dressing him. It was 8:15 P.M.

Downstairs, by the door leading out into the wings, Wonder, the band, and some members of the crew joined hands in a circle and bowed their heads. A friend of the For Real singers said a prayer: "Dear Lord, we come before you in the humblest way that we know how to ask your blessing on this performance tonight. Guide these musicians that they may use their talents to your glory. Bless Stevie for giving us this opportunity. We thank you, Lord. Amen." As the circle broke, there was a mixed chorus of "Amen" and "All right" and some hugging.

The band members now took their places on the stage. Stevie Wonder and

"You've been with us a long time, Winnie, and we're prepared to offer you a generous severance package."

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For Real stood in the half-light in the wings, and Mick Parish, an equipment technician, handed Wonder a wireless microphone. Since the late eighties, it has been Wonder's show-opening gimmick to sing a couple of verses before heading out into the spotlight. This has the audience straining to see where the sound of his voice is coming from and seems to intensify the response when he finally appears. There was a flourish from the orchestra, then the clatter of drums and percussion, and then the rest of the band joined the song, an up-tempo number called "Dancing to the Rhythm," which Wonder has not released. Wonder's right hand went down to a Walkman-size pack at his hip to adjust the volume of the sound coming to him through a pair of minuscule earphones. He stood, head tipped back, swaying slightly from the hips, and biting on his lower lip. Around him, the members of For Real were performing exaggerated dance steps and stifling giggles. At the end of the song's introduction, Wonder abruptly raised the microphone to his mouth and began to sing.

When he sings, his chin is high, and he makes tiny but rapid head movements, as if he were shaking the notes loose from his throat and nose. Heard in the wings, the noise from the stage was mostly boom and rumble. Wonder's voice, though firm and clear, seemed unconnected with it and vulnerable. But you were aware of the amplified version of all this, beaming into the auditorium, and, in a moment that prickled the skin, you heard the audience roar as it picked up Wonder's voice for the first time. At the start of the chorus, he stepped forward, guided by For Real. Following them right to the curtain's edge, in a solemn, protective V-formation, were Val, the makeup woman; Greg, the wardrobe man; and Mick, the technician. There they released Wonder and the singers into the lights, and the front rows of the audience stood to greet him in a surge of screaming and whooping.

"The way it goes," a close friend of Wonder's once told me, "he's late, everybody gets mad. He turns up, it doesn't matter anymore."

LOOKING WEST FROM LAGUNA BEACH AT NIGHT

I've always liked the view from my mother-in-law's house at night,
Oil rigs off Long Beach
Like floating lanterns out in the smog-dark Pacific,
Stars in the eucalyptus,
Lights of airplanes arriving from Asia, and town lights
Littered like broken glass around the bay and back up the hill.

In summer, dance music is borne up
On the sea winds from the hotel's beach deck far below,
"Twist and Shout," or "Begin the Beguine."
It's nice to think that somewhere someone is having a good time,
And pleasant to picture them down there
Turned out, tipsy and flushed, in their white shorts and their turquoise shirts.

Later, I like to sit and look up
At the mythic history of Western civilization,
Pinpricked and clued through the zodiac.
I'd like to be able to name them, say what's what and how who got where,
Curry the physics of metamorphosis and its endgame,
But I've spent my life knowing nothing.

THE extraordinary roster of black talent on which Motown Records built its success in the sixties gradually broke away and moved on. Michael Jackson went to Epic in the late seventies; Marvin Gaye went to Columbia Records at the start of the eighties; Diana Ross packed her frocks and set off for RCA at around the same time (she recently returned to Motown); Smokey Robinson went to EMI. But Stevie Wonder stayed. More than that, by a series of canny and ambitious contractual negotiations he maneuvered himself into a position within the company where, basically, the bottom line is this: Stevie Wonder does what he likes. This is fine with Wonder, but it's also fine with Motown. The most recent deal between them, struck in 1992, is described both by Jheryl Busby, the president of Motown, and by Johanan Vigoda, Wonder's attorney, as "a lifetime deal." When one thinks of Wonder's otherworldliness, one has to keep in mind, too, that this is a man who has managed to secure for himself quantities of power and control over his work which twenty-five years ago would have seemed unimaginable for a popular musician, least of all a black popular musician.

Wonder was born Steveland Morris in Saginaw, Michigan, and when he was three his family moved to Detroit. His stepfather, Paul Hardaway, found work in a bagel factory, and his mother, Lula Mae Hardaway, cleaned houses. (Wonder has four half brothers and a half sister.) Growing up, he developed a neighborhood reputation as the blind boy with an astonishing facility on drums, piano, and harmonica, and at the age of eight he became a solo singer at Whitestone Baptist Church. Eventually, Ronnie White, a member of Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, heard the boy perform and notified Motown. Stevie had bragged to him, "I can sing badder than Smokey." He was twelve. Motown renamed him Little Stevie Wonder, and during 1963 the label released his first four albums in rapid succession.

At its peak, Motown was known as the Hit Factory, but Wonder seems to have decided early on that he wanted a little more than a place on its shop floor. Motown had paid for some of his education, sending him to the Michigan School for the Blind, in Lansing,

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LOOKING AGAIN AT WHAT I LOOKED AT FOR SEVENTEEN YEARS

Quick pink; Soutine meat-streaks in the west,
Ocean gray drop cloth underfoot;
peroxided gums—
Memory's like that, mixed metaphors, time's drone and gouache
Hovering near the horizon, black
Instinct filling the edges in, resplendent with holes.

We have it for text and narrative—
nothing is new,
Remembrance, both nerve-net and nerve-spring,
The connection of everything with everything else
(Like absences the sea fills),
Constructs us and deconstructs us, world's breath, world's body.

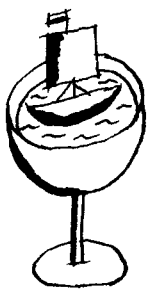
Down there, for instance, just past the security lights
The hotel fans, wave-hollows build and dispense, surf sighs
And the unseen undertow
Sucks it away to where it's unreachable for good
Until it all comes back . . .
It's like that.

—CHARLES WRIGHT

and providing him with a tutor on tour. It had groomed and spruced and polished him through his teen-age years. But its workings were geared to quick turnaround and high-turnover singles, and somewhere along the line Wonder decided that his future lay in the more expansive kinds of statements he could make on albums. When he turned twenty-one, in 1971, he reportedly received a million dollars in back payments that had been kept in trust for him by Motown; he moved from Detroit to New York; and he informed the executives of his record label that if they wanted him to remain at Motown they would have to come and get him.

"I had just given Stevie a birthday dinner in Detroit," Berry Gordy, the founder of Motown Records, recalled recently. "We'd had a lot of fun with him and Syreeta. And I get back to L.A. directly after this and there's a letter from Stevie's lawyer waiting for me saying that Stevie is disaffirming all his contracts. I was very hurt. But it seems Stevie was unhappy, too. The lawyer had jumped the gun, he'd moved on something that Stevie wasn't ready for him to move on, and Stevie released him. I was happy that Stevie had got a new attorney, because it meant that he respected me. On the other hand, the new attorney was Johanan Vigoda. After we started negotiating with Johanan, we recognized that he was very tough."

Wonder was introduced to Johanan Vigoda by Bob Margouleff and Malcolm Cecil, two recording engineers and synthesizer experts who were working with the musician Richie Havens in New York. It proved to be a pivotal meeting for them both. Vigoda had worked in music publishing in the fifties, and in 1960 had become the first East Coast lawyer for Warner Bros. Records. More likely to wear cheesecloth and jeans than a suit and tie, he had a low-key temperament and a reputation for unorthodox negotiating methods, with both of which Wonder seemed to identify. Ewart Abner, a former Motown president who negotiated with Vigoda, told me, "Johanan would disregard protocol, walk in with a grapefruit in his hand, or sit in a meeting eating seeds. He was totally informal. He gives the impression that he's not the sharpest attorney you've ever met. But do not be deceived."



Vigoda is sixty-six years old now, and still represents Wonder. There has never been a formal agreement between them. "Stevie is free, and always has been free, to get rid of me," Vigoda told me. He was speaking on the phone from his home in Lake Tahoe, where it was one in the morning. He talks in a low, easy drawl and goes in for long, ruminative silences. "At twenty-one, Stevie was interested in being treated well and in controlling his life and in presenting his music, and all those things were extraordinary things for a young man to ask at that point," he went on. "It wasn't the freedom to be dissolute or undisciplined. He wanted to be free so that he could bring the best of himself to the table."

Motown held out for as long as it could. "Berry had set up this creative machinery, hit after hit, star after star, and you didn't want it interfered with," Abner recalled. "Johanan made it very clear that Stevie wanted to be at Motown but no longer was he going to let others control the shots. Stevie had a lot to say and intended to say it. We did a lot of the negotiating at the Hyatt hotel on Sunset. We would go up to the pool on the roof, swim, have lunch, drink juice, and argue points. We would do it sitting outside restaurants. This went on for a couple of months. But we never met in the office."

Vigoda told me, "I was a vegetarian then, did a lot of yoga, stood on my head—all that kind of stuff. Abner would have three or four different lawyers working with him. It was like I'm a running back and there are four people trying to tackle me at the same time, so the only way I can reasonably come through this is on a kind of spontaneous trip."

In the concluded deal, Wonder was free to produce his own records, using his own production company, Taurus Productions, and to publish his own songs, through his own music-publishing outlet, Black Bull Music. In 1976, when Vigoda renegotiated, Motown paid Wonder a thirteen-million-dollar sign-

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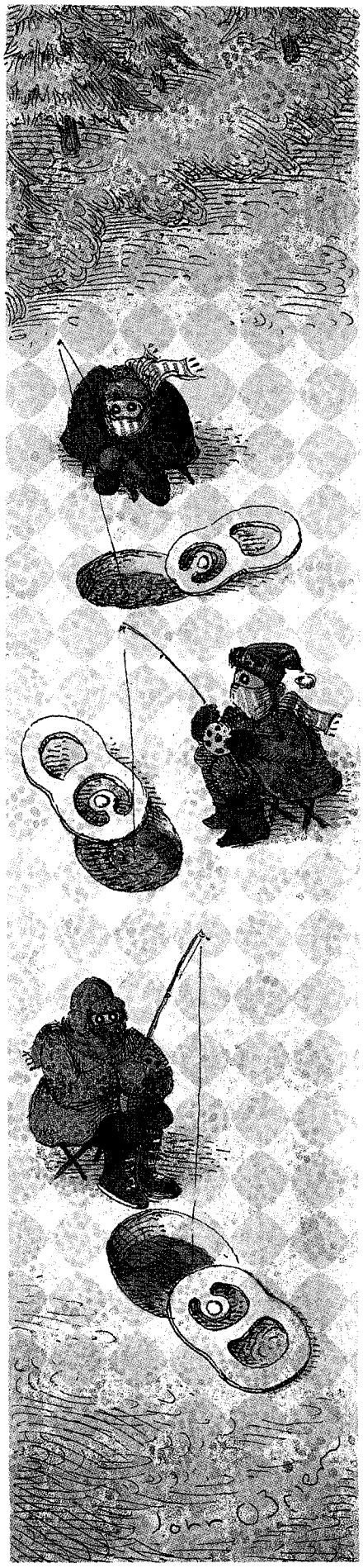

ing fee and agreed to the insertion in the contract of an unprecedented clause granting him right of approval if Motown was bought by another company. "I didn't think I'd be selling Motown at all," Berry Gordy told me. "I thought that was a little weird. It was off track, but it didn't really mean that much to me at the time. I didn't like any of it, but I knew that it was business I had to do to make the deal." (As it turned out, Motown was sold to MCA in 1988. Although Wonder made it known that he would have preferred the company to remain a black-owned business, he did not oppose the deal.)

Wonder's 1992 deal with Motown is unprecedented, too. Michael Jackson signed a six-album deal with Sony in 1991; the Rolling Stones are under contract with Virgin for as long as it takes to make three albums; U2 signed a six-album, sixty-million-dollar deal with PolyGram. But a whole lifetime? Jheryl Busby said, "I thought that was what the state of things should be for an artist of his rank, considering what he said for the trademark and what his contribution has been to music and society. This is a guy you don't ever want to see recording for anyone else. I worked hard to make Stevie see that we had his interests at heart. Stevie is what I call the crown jewel, the epitome. I wasn't looking at Stevie as an aging superstar but as an icon who could pull us into the future."

WONDER'S two-and-a-half-hour shows this winter were remarkable not just for the quality of the material he wedged in but also for the quality of the material he was often forced to leave out: no "For Once in My Life," no "Living for the City," no "Boogie On Reggae Woman." Other performers rush their old hits together in medleys, as if years of performance had rubbed their patience with them thin. But Wonder remains keen enough to be thorough. Nobody else works a back catalogue quite so hard or with quite so much joy. Every time Wonder sang "Uptight (Everything's Alright)," it sounded as if he had only just thought of it and couldn't quite believe how racy it felt. He could settle for an easier life, but he remains intent on nudging at the melodies, finding new points of entry, new trajectories, crossing key changes at daringly different angles. The intensity with which he inhabits the songs he sings leaps at you in the auditorium.

After a Stevie Wonder show, a number of people are generally allowed backstage to meet Stevie, shake hands, and pose for photographs. These may be Motown employees or retailers or people from radio stations, or they may simply be fans who have made an especially good or especially persistent case for themselves at the stage door. After a show on the campus of Arizona State University, in Tempe, some thirty people jammed inside Wonder's dressing room. You don't need to be an old friend to be allowed to invade his personal space. Many of those who posed for pictures with an arm around Wonder's shoulder found themselves rubbing his back or gently kneading him. Many felt no compunction about folding themselves around him in a full body hug. Try that with Madonna, and in seconds someone large in a suit will have you face down with your arm between your shoulder blades. Here it's cool.

A young blind man, holding a white cane, told Wonder that when they met some ten years previously Wonder had presented him with a harmonica, and now, he said, he was back for another one. Wonder, beaming, put an arm around the man's shoulder and said to the room generally, "Take a picture before I steal his stick." A portly man in a suit wanted Wonder to sign his Bible—"front page and back." Wonder signed the back but said, "I shouldn't sign the cover." A man sang him a song he had written about love brightening the darkness within. Wonder turned an ear toward him and swayed. "Got a lot of love for you, man," the man said at the end. Then he tried to call his wife on his cellular phone, so that she, too, could speak with Wonder, but the line was busy. A woman in tears told Wonder, "I just love you so much."

At 1 A.M., with the dressing room now cleared, Wonder, using a fork and his fingers, ate a small portion of skinless chicken and some salad. And then, on the sofa, with his head tipped back and his mouth open, he fell asleep.

IN addition to seventeen Grammy awards, Stevie Wonder has been the recipient of a Solidarity Peace Award from Poland; an Award of Peace and Freedom from the people of Bratislava,

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Czechoslovakia; a People's Peace and Freedom Award and a Humanitarian Award for Dedication to Children, both given to him by Hungary; and UNICEF awards from Japan and France. He was prominent in the campaign to establish Martin Luther King Day as a national holiday, writing and releasing the movement's theme song, "Happy Birthday," and participating in two marches on Washington in the early eighties. (The legal holiday was approved in 1983.) Still, there were people who thought Wonder might be about to overreach himself when, in the late eighties, the Motown star began to talk about the possibility of running for mayor of Detroit.

It was an arresting prospect—perhaps America's most deeply troubled city run by perhaps America's most deeply utopian philosopher. The speeches would at least have been interesting. Lengthy and scrupulously worded appeals to universal brotherhood have regularly been featured in Wonder's onstage patter. Response in the audience divides pretty much between those who find this uplifting and those who wish he would hurry up and play "Sir Duke." Although Wonder was reared as a Baptist, his faith and his sense of purpose crystallized following a highway accident in North Carolina in August, 1973. The car Wonder was travelling in collided with a logging truck, and a log came loose, broke through the windshield of the car, and struck him on the head. He was lucky to survive: the accident left him in a comatose state for several days. (A rounded mass of scar tissue is still visible above Wonder's right eye.) According to Ewart Abner, "He was already on the path and his music told you that, but the accident heightened and escalated his reaching who he is. There was a calmness that set in after that. I don't think I've ever seen him get truly agitated or upset to the point of becoming immobilized. I've seen him impatient, excited, anxious, but after the accident there was a maturity that was unusual for his age."

Since then, some basic Pentecostal faith has mixed with a touch of astrology and a batch of less determinable New Age-isms to form, in Wonder's thinking, something unimpeachably sincere, if not always readily comprehensible. In the notes that accompanied "Songs in the Key of Life," for example, we read, "So let it be that I shall live the idea of the song and use its words as my sight into the unknown, but believe positive tomorrow and I shall so when in evil darkness smile up at the sun and it shall to me as if I were a pyramid give me the key in which I am to sing, and if it is a key that you too feel, may you join and sing with me." The last part, at least, was easy. It was difficult to know how the rest would translate into urban policy. Wonder eventually set the mayoral scheme aside.

Still, there are other causes. One afternoon during the January tour, Stevie Wonder sat in an armchair in his hotel suite with a phone directly in front of him, the keyboard on a polished rosewood table to one side, and the humidifier on and the heating up high, and talked to Keith Harris, an Englishman who is one of his assistants, about the earthquake that had just occurred in Kobe, Japan. Wonder said, "What do they say—some eighteen hundred people dead? So, what—did people just run out of their houses?"

Harris described carefully a video sequence he'd seen on CNN, taken by a security camera, of an office interior during the quake, its furniture travelling from one wall to another. "There was a person in that picture," Harris added. "Just at the end, a person slid into the picture."

Wonder said, "You mean like on the floor?"

Harris said, "Yeah, just came flying in. It's horrendous. There's huge areas of freeway down, there's rail tracks down, there's trains that have fallen off the high-level tracks onto the roads."

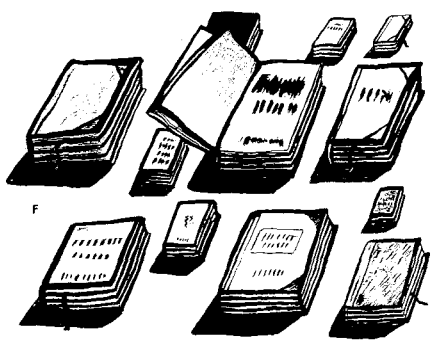
Wonder sat back and tossed his head from side to side.

Harris said, "One thing that's come up this morning is the idea of doing your Osaka concert as some kind of benefit."

Wonder said, speaking quietly, "I think so. I think so. Definitely."

I asked Wonder if he had any friends in the earthquake zone. It was a pretty dumb question.

"Well, I know some people in Osaka," he said. "I just— Well, everyone's my friend. I just feel horrible."



ARRIVING from Phoenix at the Los Angeles airport, we emerged from the plane into a busy arrival lounge, and there were some cries of "Brother Stevie!" and "Stevie Wonder!" and a solitary, derisive shout of "Welcome to Hawaii." Two women working on the baggage X-ray burst spontaneously into the chorus of "I Just Called to Say I Love You." It dawned on me that a substantial part of the soundtrack of Wonder's public life consists of the voices of complete strangers telling him they love him.

Wonder's youngest son, Kwame, had also been on the flight from Phoenix—a handsome, energetic six-year-old wearing jeans, a sweatshirt, and a Mighty Morphin Power Rangers backpack. (Kwame appeared again the following day in his father's dressing room at the Universal Amphitheatre, in Los Angeles. Wonder spent some time picking him up and dumping him upside down onto a sofa. Then they sat together at the dressing room's grand piano, and Wonder played his ballad "Overjoyed" and improvised new words. "Where's my belt," he sang, "so that I can whip my little boy?" Kwame squirmed with pleasure, and said, "Play the jungle one," and Wonder thumped out the introduction from his theme to the Spike Lee movie "Jungle Fever.") Wonder and Kwame's mother are no longer romantically involved, and neither the singer nor his representatives would tell me her name or where she lives. By all accounts, he remains friendly with her, as he does with Syreeta Wright, and with the mothers of his other children: Yolanda Simmons, who lives in New Jersey with Aisha, nineteen, and Keita, seventeen; and Melody McCully, who lives in Southern California with ten-year-old Mumtaz. Other relationships seem to come and go with some fluidity. There are occasional rumors that Wonder has got engaged, but nothing comes of it. "I always seem to be in love," he once said.

A limo was waiting for Wonder at the Los Angeles airport, and as it headed for the city Wonder got right on the car phone. On his lap he held a voice computer, the size of a slim book, in a black case. Wonder pressed keys through the case, and a robotic voice called out phone

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numbers at, to the untrained ear, baffling speed. Most of the calls that he placed were to hotel rooms where nobody answered. More often than not, he reached an answering machine and left a message, usually in a comic, street hustler's drawl. A typical message was "Yo, baby. Wassup? Page me. Cos I need to know wassup. So page me. Love ya. Not whenever. Not whatever. But forever."

Birdsong started talking about a new song that Wonder was working on, entitled "Please Don't Hurt My Baby." Birdsong maintained that this was "the funkiest thing since 'Superstition.'" Wonder disagreed. Birdsong bet Wonder an apple that he would be proved right. Wonder went into a song from the show, "The Stevie Ray Blues," marking the fourth beat in the bar by using his elbow or the flat of his hand variously against the seat back, the edge of the seat, the door handle, and Birdsong's ribcage, and singing, "Let's rock"—thump—"rock the house tonight. Let's rock"—thump—"rock the house tonight."

It was three in the afternoon, and we were on our way to the Marina del Rey Middle School, where Wonder had agreed to appear briefly before an assembly of three hundred children to promote an American Express hunger-awareness program. On the way up a side path to the school, Michael Mitchell, the head of publicity at Motown Records, told Wonder, "They know someone's coming, but they don't know who, so when they see you they're going to go nuts." We stood in a corridor beside a door to the hall. Someone on the stage announced Wonder, and we walked in.

The children, as predicted, went nuts. Wonder said, "It really is a pleasure to be here at your middle school." Then he spoke a few words about hunger. "I do believe there is no reason why anyone in this country should go to bed hungry." After that, he sat at the school's baby-grand piano and played "Take the Time Out," a track from "Conversation Peace" that he donated to the Charge Against Hunger campaign. The piano sounded a little foggy. Birdsong and Keith Harris moved to prop up its lid, and the lid came away entirely in their hands—a Laurel and Hardy moment as Wonder continued to play. Someone was videotaping the event, occasionally pointing the camera at the throng. The children went nuts at that, too, drowning out Wonder almost entirely. Wonder seemed to have lost them altogether to chatter and fidgeting, but then he broke into "I Just Called to Say I Love You," and it brought a universal screech of recognition. At the end, there was cheering, clapping, and stamping.

These days, kids are not necessarily Wonder's primary target audience. "Conversation Peace" is the first Stevie Wonder album to really soak up rhythms and production details from hip-hop and rap. Yet there are clearly young Wonder fans, and fans in almost every other age group, too. For more than a decade now, the problem facing Motown has been how to translate the breadth of Wonder's appeal into commercial terms. In 1976, "Songs in the Key of Life" went straight onto the charts at No. 1 and stayed there for fourteen weeks; twelve years later, "Characters" had a brief stay on the charts and peaked at No. 17. For an artist who could once expect to sell upward of six million albums, it must have been a disappointment.

Motown's biggest act now is Boyz II Men, the young close-harmony vocal quartet whose 1991 début album, "Cooleyhighharmony," sold nearly eight million copies, and whose 1994 followup album, "II," went directly to No. 1—the first Motown album to do so since "Songs in the Key of Life." But, even when his stock has seemed at its lowest, Wonder, as if to prove himself a shrewd long-term investment, has been able to produce a hit out of nowhere. In 1985, the single "Part-Time Lover," from the low-intensity "In Square Circle" album, topped the charts in four categories: pop, R. & B., adult contemporary, and dance—the ultimate crossover. It's probably fair to say that Stevie Wonder enjoys more good will in more diverse areas of the recording industry than any other artist. The people at Motown could be forgiven for looking out at the world and seeing one vast market just waiting for the right record.

Outside the school, a group of some fifteen children had gathered by the limo. Birdsong said, "O.K., if you get in a line, you can all say 'Hi' to Stevie." The children lined up, and Wonder shook each one of them by the hand. We got back in the car. "One kid said he isn't washing his hand ever again," Birdsong said. Keith Harris said, "It looked like he hadn't washed it for a long time anyway." Wonder said, "That's so English, Keith," and then performed a consonant-perfect impression of Harris's accent. There was some laughter about the lid of the piano, but otherwise no post mortem on the event just past. It was already subsumed within the flow. The limo dropped Wonder outside his apartment, which is in a crisp white building on Wilshire Boulevard. "Take care in L.A.," he said to me

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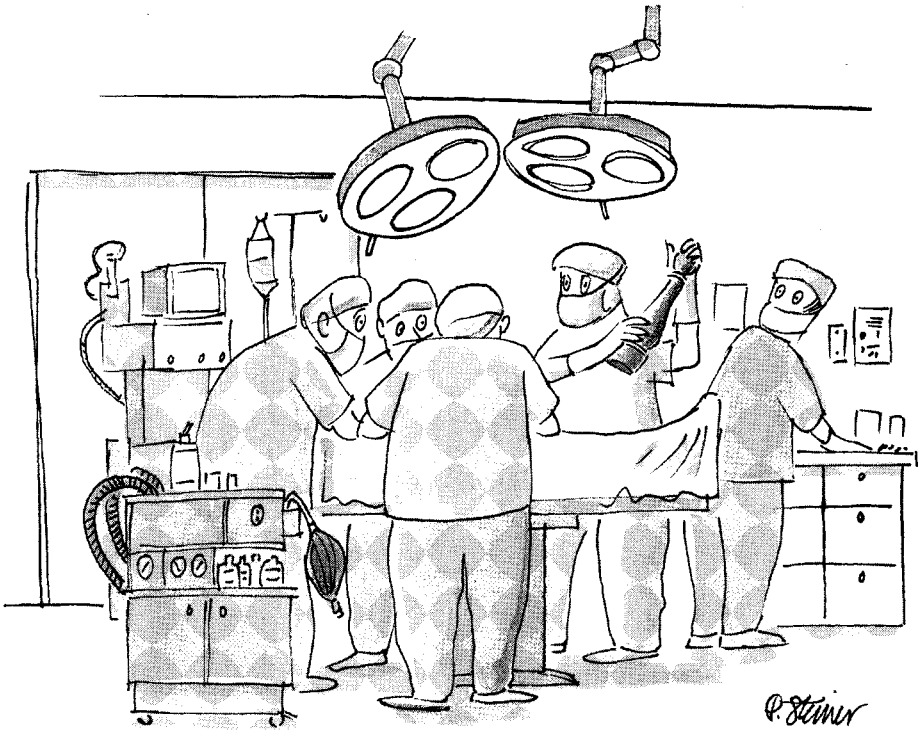
as he was getting out of the car. And then, in a low growl, he added, "Watch out for the jitterbugs and thugs."

WONDER owns the apartment in Los Angeles, a brownstone on Manhattan's Upper East Side, and a house in Detroit. By show-business standards, though, he is not an especially acquisitive person; with the exception of musical equipment, he seems largely indifferent to material things. His business investments are music-related—his publishing company, his Los Angeles recording studio, and KJLH, an urban/R. & B. radio station he owns in Los Angeles. Wonder's mother lives in a large house he bought for her in the San Fernando Valley, and he owns the house in New Jersey where Yolanda Simmons lives with their two children.

Wonder doesn't spend much time at home, and is content to live for long periods in hotel suites. His apartment on Wilshire Boulevard is functionally furnished, the only clutter being instruments and musical gadgetry. For the most part, his everyday needs are looked after by Brian LaRoda, who has been his personal assistant for many years, and lives in an apartment near Wonder's; the singer employs no permanent domestic staff, not even a cook.

Wonder's social life is similarly straightforward and unfussy. One of his assistants once remarked to me that Wonder could probably fill his calendar for the entire year with awards ceremonies, tribute dinners, and guest appearances at benefit concerts, and he does do a moderate amount of this, but he spends far more time in the company of close friends. He occasionally gives small dinner parties for them. His Christmas present this year from Val Williams, his makeup assistant, was a dinner service for six. Williams gave it to Wonder in his dressing room before a show, setting a place on a coffee table and talking him through each item. Williams said, "There's a towel here, so you can wipe anything off." Wonder leered and quipped, "Hands, preferably." He drummed his fingers on the plate, then lifted it up and drummed his fingers on the plate holder. He ran his hands over the glasses and held the cutlery. He spent several minutes familiarizing himself with it all. "That's really sweet, Val," he said, finally. "It's beautiful."



"Fresh ground pepper?"

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Occasionally, Wonder will get the urge to be more gregarious. In London recently, he went to the Orange, in West Kensington, a tiny club for new acts, to see a gospel band called Nu Colours. This January, during the tour, he stayed an extra day in Miami so that he could attend the Super Bowl. Such activities, though, are always subordinate to Wonder's main concern—songwriting. Approach him from whatever angle you choose, and eventually you reach music. And, because of the music, all other arrangements are subject to change or cancellation.

AFTER Wonder's show at the Universal Amphitheatre, Motown Records threw a party in a tented area behind the building. By way of advance promotion, a series of television screens in the tent played, over and over, a fifteen-second clip from the video for a mid-tempo ballad called "For Your Love," the first single from "Conversation Peace." The clip featured Stevie Wonder, an expanse of golden desert, some children, and a large horse. Jheryl Busby told me, with enthusiasm, "I think this may be, on a global basis, one of the best-set-up albums we have ever done. It's textbook. I personally closed the year out at the Pacific Rim, getting people excited about it there. We've had the American tour, with kids walking out afterward saying, 'Wow! Now I know why I like Stevie Wonder.' Stevie visits Japan soon; he leaves, he makes a promotional stop in Europe—the world has been set up."

These are brisk comeback plans, but not ones that seem to affect the person at their center. (In a sign that he may have some global-basis ideas of his own, Wonder has begun to speak about relocating to Ghana, but it's the kind of thing he's said before, and nothing has ever come of it.) At the Paramount Theatre in Oakland, two days after the L.A. show, I watched Wonder close an exhilarating performance, leave the stage, climb the stairs to his dressing room, and, without a word to anyone, sit down at his keyboard and begin playing again. Various assistants hovered, dabbing him with towels and offering pieces of fruit, but Wonder ignored them. Greg, the dresser, fluffed a clean pair of socks in Wonder's face. Getting no reaction, he draped them over Wonder's arm, and they stayed there for several minutes while Wonder continued to play and sing. Finally, Wonder bent down and removed his shoes, but he was still singing as he changed his socks. ♦

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THE ART WORLD

AMERICAN DIASPORIST

R. B. Kitaj at the Metropolitan Museum and the Marlborough Gallery.

BY ANTHONY LANE

"I'VE always been controversial; suddenly I seem to have become the most controversial painter alive," R. B. Kitaj says. "I know I must be doing something right." That something is a major retrospective of his work now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; and this week is your last chance to catch the companion show at the Marlborough Gallery. Kitaj initiates may be thrown by the demands made upon them: charged with sex and shadowed by erudition, these are pictures born of difficult feelings. People who know the stuff well, on the other hand, should be gratified to see how the fixations of Kitaj's youth have struck deep, and grown. The earliest image comes from 1958, the latest from last year, and it is clear that Kitaj has never relinquished the draftsman's desire to nag away at the human form—lithe or decrepit, masterful or crunched by circumstance. "His New Freedom," composed in pastel and charcoal in 1978, shows a figure pulling aside his shirt, with a toothy grin smeared to one side of his face. It is one of the most memorable nightmares since Goya, and, as with Goya, a lone figure somehow becomes a history painting—you can only guess at the forces that have made this human mask and then tried to tear it off.

The life of Ronald Brooks Kitaj is itself stuffed with history. Born in 1932, he was raised in Cleveland and upstate New York. He studied art at the Cooper Union, and for five years, starting in the late forties, he shipped out with the merchant fleet—doing the Rio run, losing his virginity in a Havana brothel, that kind of thing. Kitaj may be the last artist to live, rather than dream, a Conradian way of life; his itchy feet took him to Vienna and Catalonia, in and out of the United States Army, to Paris and Oxford, and finally to London, where he has made his home, on and off, for the last thirty-five years. In his quiet house in Chelsea, the ground floor has been knocked through to form a working space: sofa and bookshelves at one end, easel at the other, and, all around, the works of old friends—Lucian Freud, David Hockney, Frank Auerbach. When the rest of us buy a painting, we coo over it and hang it in solitary splendor; artists know that pictures are not relics but shifty, living presences, and they like to stack 'em.

A reviewer once complained that a Kitaj show was "littered with ideas." The artist responded, "Heavens to Betsy, I hope that's true." The English disdain for learning—or the fear of letting slip that you have any—has never taken hold of Kitaj, and he has cultivated a capacious view of what is possible, or admissible, on a single canvas. His pictures have a thickness that lies less in the paint, which looks thin and rubbed, than in the blooms of shock color and the storyteller's throng of details. One of the mysteries of English cultural life since the war has been the lack of Jewish voices in fiction; to the country's enduring detriment, it has found no Bellow, Roth, or Heller to make sense, or necessary nonsense, of its changing shape. For some reason, the Jewish genius has concentrated itself elsewhere, in painting; Freud, Auerbach, Kitaj, and Leon Kossoff make up no particular school, yet together, in their wrestlings with what Kitaj has called the "eternal, hard-fought sanities" of the medium, they have maintained a united, intense, and unmodish front.

You might have thought that Kitaj's

PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD AVEDON

R. B. Kitaj, London, September 25, 1994.

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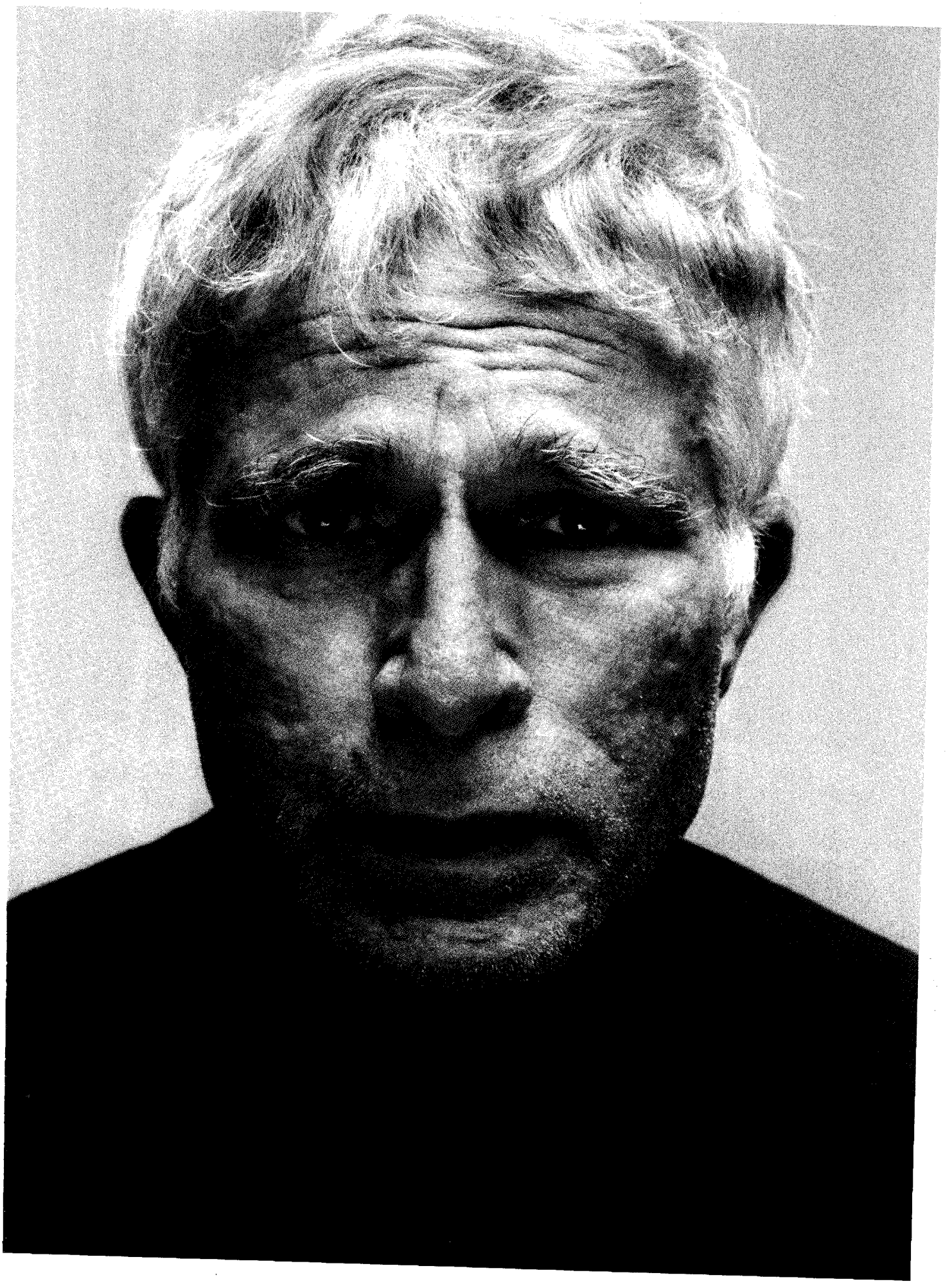

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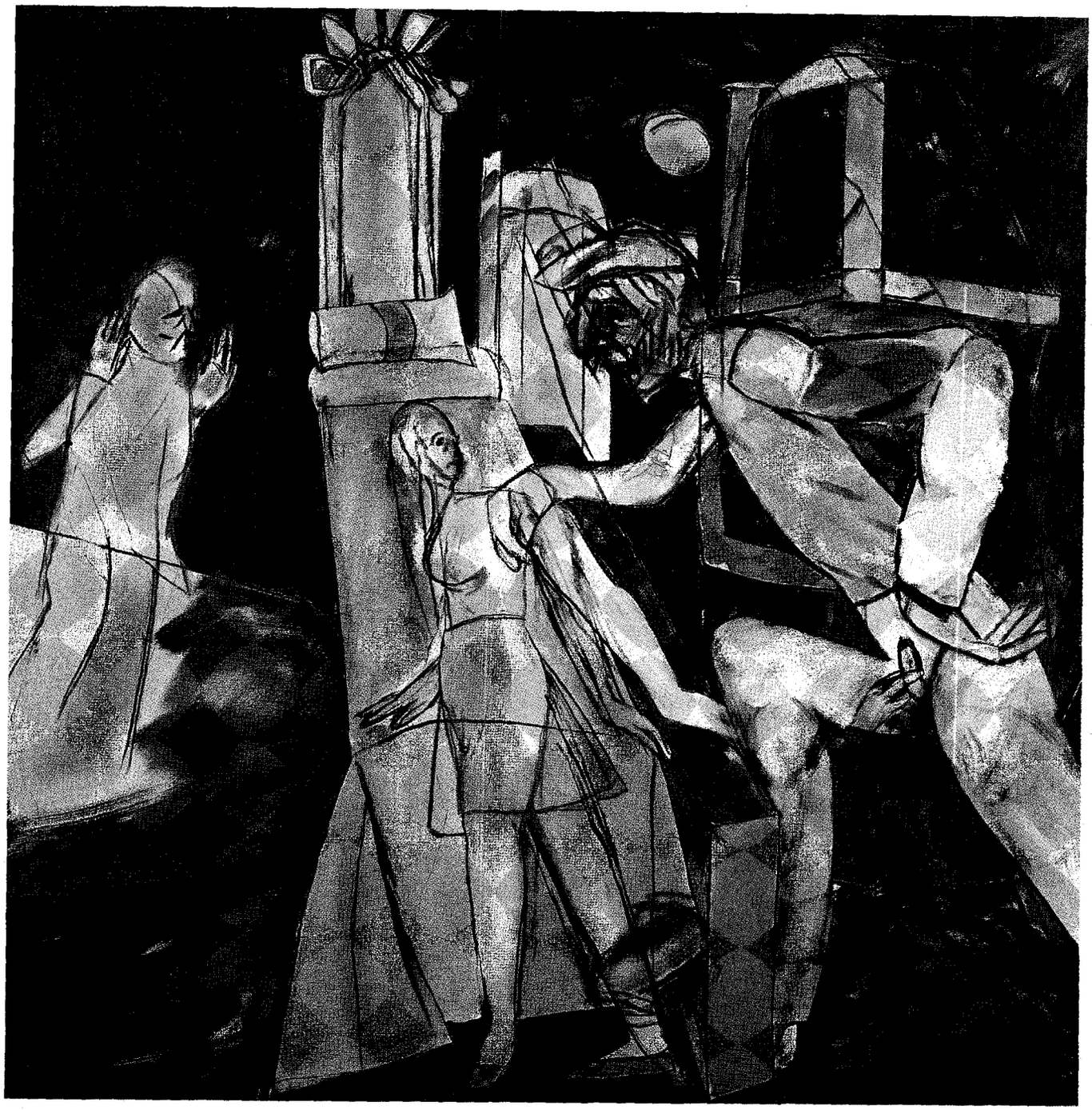

decades of London life would have earned him solid respect, and his admirers—from Isaiah Berlin to Paul McCartney—are an impressively broad crew. But, last year, as if to prove that you can never take England for granted, or count on its embrace, the critics rounded on this show when it opened at the Tate Gallery, and drew blood. It was not a pretty sight. "There's always been this pattern in England—in London, anyway," Kitaj says. "If you played the game, you got out the back door with the swag. Eliot and James and Sargent, I adore all three of them, but they played the game." He has paid the price for playing his own game, and is fond of consoling himself with Baudelaire's words to the beleaguered Manet: "It seems you have the honor to be hated." That honor has dwindled with the show's arrival at the Met, where the hanging is finer than it was at the Tate, and where the critical reception has been, if not warm, at least not homicidal. Kitaj may even have relished the irony of Deborah Solomon's dig in the *Wall Street Journal:* "Disappointingly British," she called him. Wherever he is, the guy just can't win. We like our artists to stay still, as if they were posing for us.

But you can't pin Kitaj down. "I just follow my own passions and obsessions wherever they lead me, and boy, they sure lead me into places where nobody else wants to go," he says. He has always taken his delights seriously, and in great variety: Westerns, the promise of pornography ("Why can't they make a 'War

"Who Can Be Happy and Free?," 1990–93.

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and Peace' with fucking in it?"), the friendship of Hockney, the example of Eliot and Pound.

These days, however, pleasure is hard to come by, and you can see it in Kitaj's face; a new sorrow has crept into his scholarly, scrutinizing air. Last September, as the critical thunder in England rolled on, his second wife, Sandra—an American artist, fifteen years his junior, whom he had married in 1983—died suddenly from a stroke, leaving him alone with their nine-year-old son, Max. "She died in a weekend, and the light went out," Kitaj says. To have your art pilloried and your heart broken in a matter of months feels to him like an injustice beyond all reason. "I have to say, I'm in such a state that I'm not in my right mind, because I will always associate what happened with Sandra's death," he says. "I get angry, I start cursing, I want to kill somebody. She wasn't like that. She was a radiant, happy person who lit up every room she ever walked into. People didn't even believe her. They didn't believe that smile."

When I visited him in London, he stood before some new drawings of his late wife. Tacked roughly to the wall, they weren't just unfinished, they were barely started, maybe unstartable. "I can't remember what she looked like," he said sadly. It was a surprise, then, to find that one of them had made it into the Marlborough show—the delicate "Farewell, My Lovely." Its naked central figure is viewed from behind; Kitaj is beginning to remember again, but he still can't believe that smile. ♦

"He and She (The Spirit of the Bed Watching)," 1991-94.

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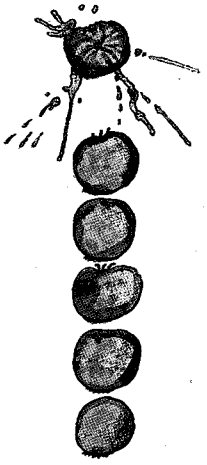
FICTION

THE WORLD OF IDEAS

BY JULIE HECHT



IT was the summer I stopped having fun. We were on vacation in our favorite place. A boy came into our kitchen and said, "My mother wants you to come over. She has an emergency about tomatoes." It was nearing the hottest part of the day in my opinion—noon—but I guessed I could manage to go a few yards across the lane to their house. I'd gone down the lane twenty years before to visit the birthplace and observatory of the first woman astronomer, Maria Mitchell, and I'd been trying to go back ever since. It was always too hot during visiting hours, and just when it cooled off, at four o'clock, the hours were over.

"She bought all these tomatoes from one farmer and they're not good and she bought just a few from the other farmer and they're the good ones," the boy said. "She wants you to taste one of each."

But I had just finished drinking bancha, twig tea, and I wasn't ready for tomatoes. I explained this to the boy. He was ten.

"Why can't you eat tomatoes after tea?" he asked.

"I'll go over and look at them," I said, because I never minded going to their house, since it was so much better in every way than the one we rented. But I had a fear of going over there, too.

I went across the lane up the hill under the apple tree into their kitchen. Everything was custom-made for the Sub-Zero everything else. I didn't wish to own Sub-Zero refrigerators but I liked seeing them in other people's kitchens. I wanted an old round-cornered refrigerator from the nineteen-fifties. Although those refrigerators brought back memories of every food I couldn't stand to eat—meat, chicken, milk, and eggs—it was the outside I planned to look at.

When I go into other people's houses I'm like a visitor from another planet looking at the Sub-Zero things they have. "They're not so hot," this tomato woman had said when I admired the tremendous size. "I'm sorry I got them." Between her two residences, she had several. And at the home of Dr. Arnold Loquesto, the world-renowned reproductive surgeon I'd consulted and photographed in Massachusetts, his wife had said that their refrigerator wasn't wide enough. This is why it's best not to get into the appliance world too far—you're always disappointed—and also why I'm still waiting for the sandblaster to send someone to take apart our nineteen-thirties stove for him to sandblast.

The boy's mother was in a hyped-up state. I'd recently realized that this was her everyday condition.

"Oh, you came, thank you!" she said. "Only you can understand how distraught I am over these tomatoes!"

She was wearing a kind of exercise pants I'd never understood. They were shiny, tight, black nylon Bermuda-shorts-length leotards. Why wear anything like that on these hot August days, or any day? My exercise attire consisted of a man's sleeveless white undershirt and cotton boxer shorts in the pink-and-white striped pattern Dr. Loquesto had shown to some semiconscious patients in the recovery room one day. He'd turned around in a modest way, his back to us, and showed an inch of stripes after one of the patients' husbands had asked about the waistband showing above the surgical bottoms, which were slipping down. The surgeon was trying to blow bubbles with some chewed-out gum but took the time to stop and share his sources for striped shorts and Argyle socks.

As my neighbor worried about the tomatoes, she opened a jar of Hellmann's mayonnaise and put some into a bowl with lobster. She was preparing lunch, still dressed in the tight pants. I felt so much more sensibly dressed, in an old thin linen shirt and skirt. I hoped her husband wouldn't come in and ask me why I wore the same shirt every day. I'd already told him I had eight of the same kind—two white, two beige, two pink, two peach—but he wasn't listening.

"Oh shut up!" his wife had said to him. "Why do you wear the same J. Crew polo shirt every day? You have twenty, but that's O.K. She wants to be cool and comfortable is why, right?"

"If they're four different colors why do they all look the same?" the boy asked.

"Clorox," I said. Tomatoes and Clorox were two things I hadn't been able to give up for the macrobiotic, biodegradable way of life.

I looked over to the counter where there were several pounds of red tomatoes and a few pink ones.

"These are better," my neighbor said, picking up a pink one. Then she cut it with a long, sharp, pointy knife. Her knives were always sharp, I noticed whenever I used one. Our knives were always dull, and I thought about this whenever I read about the woman who had mutilated her husband with a kitchen knife. Such an act would never occur to me, even if I were so inclined, because nothing can be cut that easily with our knives. I've asked my husband for several years to sharpen them—he has the necessary tools handy but he never does it. This is a good reason to mutilate a man, I would think. The first little touch would wake him, that first sawing motion that gets nowhere, even to slice a tomato. I'd read in a cookbook, "You can severely mutilate excellent tomatoes with a dull knife." And I'd learned from Dr. Loquesto that reproductive surgeons practice new techniques of endoscopic surgery on pumpkins, butternut squash, and green peppers. "That's for causing me to mutilate so many tomatoes with dull knives" could be my defense.

"Taste this," my neighbor said. "Then taste this one, and tell me what you think. I won't tell you which is from which farm because I know you think one farmer is an anti-Semite."

"They all are, probably. No, most hate all the summer people, but one hates the few Jews she knows."

"I could kill myself. I bought ten

ELIP RAGOWSKI

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pounds of these and they're lousy and one pound of these and they're fantastic."

"How can they be good when they're so pink?" I asked.

"You can't judge a book by its cover," the boy said.

"If you are in the presence of people who are excited, angry, and anxious, you will naturally move toward those states. . . . Avoid the company of agitated minds." I'd read this in the comprehensive manual of wellness "Natural Health, Natural Medicine," and I thought of this household as an example of how that worked. This household, and also the personality of Dr. Loquesto.

I'll taste the tomatoes and leave quickly, I decided. But to my surprise the pinker tomato tasted better than the redder one. "You're right," I said. I tried to sound calm.

"Now I have to run back and get more before they're sold out!" my neighbor said. "What will I do with this crummy ten pounds? Do you want some?"

"I have my own bad tomatoes. I stopped going to the better farm after they lied to me about flowers and just stopped short of referring to someone as 'a little Jew.' "

"I go to whoever has product," she said. "And I'm half Jewish. You're only one-fourth, or whatever." I'd never heard the word "product" used this way.

"Do you buy Hanro underwear when the label says 'Made in Germany'?" I asked.

"No! Please don't tell me this! It's made in Switzerland! Do you buy it?"

"It must have been one freak pair. When I pointed it out to the store owner, an Orthodox Jew who was wearing a skullcap, he said he'd send them back."

"I can't believe it! Hanro! The best. What will I do with these tomatoes is my immediate crisis. Underpants I can deal with later."

"Take them back and exchange them for corn."

"Their corn isn't as good, either. I only buy corn from the crazy one you won't go to."

"Exchange them for broccoli and cauliflower. They told me they don't spray those. They spray only the corn, if you can believe them."

"I'm not bringing them back. I'll make sauce. Is that a good idea?"

"It will be acid sauce."

"I'll put in sugar, something you would die before you would do. Am I right?"

"Put in carrots and onions. And a pound of basil."

"O.K., and then will you come for dinner? Ramona! Ramona, please come and get this sauce started! How many carrots? I'll use sugar because that's what I know. Can I get you a few pounds while I'm there, or do you like to pick out your own?"

"I have to start going there again. I'll pick my way around the crude remarks."

"What else besides the anti-Semitic thing? Where's my housekeeper?"

"Well, they lied to me about the snapdragons."

"What kind of lie? Tell me, I must know. Only you would take this to heart. I have a thick skin and can buy produce anywhere on the island."

"I asked for white snapdragons and she wrote it on the blackboard. I left the beach at five-thirty the next day to get to the farm—even though I'd just gotten to the beach at four and wanted to stay until six. Her cousin was at the flower stand and she said, 'We don't have any white.' I said, 'Are you sure? Jane said they'd pick them today.' She said, 'I know, because I'm the one who picked today.' Then the next day I asked Jane when there might be some again. She said, 'Oh, we have them, I just forgot to pick them. Pam made up what she told you. I thought she did quite well with that story, don't you?' "

"You want better produce, so you'll have to steel yourself to go back, right?"

The housekeeper arrived wearing a white uniform.

"O.K., Ramona. I want to make a very delicious sauce from these lousy tomatoes, so do what this artistic person says and put in all my onions and carrots and if that doesn't work we'll add sugar. What do I care? I have a cupboard filled with candy."

I'd been up for only a few hours and suddenly I was tired. I didn't want to see onions yet. Soon the other members of the household would start coming in for lunch and arguments. Even if they weren't arguing, it sounded as if they were, because they all talked at once. Especially loud were the two teen-age boys, who stayed out at night drinking, then came home with friends who threw up in the wildflower field owned by the conservation foundation. I knew this for a fact, because sometimes I was up listening to a repeat of "Crossfire," and our living room is right on the lane next to the field. Then the boys would sleep until one and stumble downstairs to punch one or both of their little brothers. That would start them all yelling. Then into the kitchen to eat bowls of cereal in milk that they left on the table when they were through. Next, a fight with their mother about where their new shirts were. The husband, a Wall Street wizard, would come in talking into his portable phone and then start asking where some expensive new sports equipment was. The ten-year-old boy was often morose. The five-year-old boy was angry, too, although he had some charm, which came through from time to time. Once he asked me the question "Have you ever tasted dog food?"

"No, what an idea! Why do you ask?"

"Well, I saw someone eat dog food on television and ever since then I've wanted to eat some so badly."

"It wasn't dog food," I said. "They put a label on a can of beans so it would look like dog food."

"No, it was dog food! I saw it! It really was!"

The more I explained how these things were done, the angrier he got, and he finally stormed out of the room.

Then one afternoon when I was trying to deadhead some perennials in the border near their property, I heard all four boys fighting. The oldest one did something mean and rough to prevent the ten-year-old from helping with a task they'd all been assigned as if they were a normal American family. It was a job like gluing something down or putting some water sealant on a piece of wood. A few seconds into the job the fight started. "You little f- - -," the ten-year-old shouted at his big brother.

"Children, the 'f' word is not a noun," I thought I could go over and say, but we weren't on friendly enough terms. Also, I might sound like Miss Jean Brodie. "You little f- - -head!" was something I'd heard children say, and it was preferable.

I was the only person in the neighborhood who was still speaking to the family since they had done several bad things. They didn't care, or hadn't noticed, how they were treated. If they had

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"Damn! I keep waking up in the middle of the day."

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things to do over, they would do the exact same things. The worst thing they had done involved picking berries.

On the lane near our houses, wild raspberries grew over a fence. It was the custom for children to go by each day and pick whatever they could reach. It was also O.K. to bring a small stepladder or chair to reach a bit higher. No one ever picked more than a cupful. But this family decided they had a way to get more berries, and the way was to drive their Mercedes station wagon into the lane and climb on top of it. The lane was so narrow that the gigantic vehicle took up the entire space. When other cars tried to go by, the family kept right on picking. "They picked the brambles clean! They left that car there! Can you believe it?" people would say, for years to come. And one lady from the D.A.R., a lady who attributed their manners to what was half of their religion, said, "What did they need all those berries for? Was it to bake their Rosh Sha Hanna pies?" This sounded to me like the kind of thing Ezra Pound might have said. Also, intentionally incorrect pronunciation is often a sign of anti-Semitism.

"Are pies part of the holiday?" I asked this woman.

"What else could they need that many berries for?" she said.

I remembered what I'd read in the "Vegetation on the Cape" chapter in the 1923 Wallace Nutting book, "Massachusetts Beautiful":

> As we wound along a by-road we came upon a neat cottage worthy of portrayal. As we skirted about it we discovered the most luscious and wonderful cultivated blackberries we have ever seen. They were at the acme of perfection and we look back to the hour . . . in which we exhibited a marked degree of Christian fortitude. . . . With no one looking, and even the cottage locked and everyone absent, was it not a mark of deep-down religion which prevented our even tasting? How we wanted to try those berries! " 'Twere worth ten years of peaceful life one *quart* of their array!"

I THOUGHT about going home to the kitchen of our rented house. It would be more peaceful there. But I was afraid I'd see my husband coming in from his five-mile jog in the midday sun. You could tell him that the Surgeon General and every medical authority in the world had warned against this time of day for running, and he would keep right on doing it. (Even when the Surgeon General was a respected appointee, unlike the one who told David Letterman her lunch included Campbell's soup, the one with big pieces of beef, and a Diet Coke.) It had taken ten years to get him to remove his sweatshirt before running at noon. "It feels great. I love to sweat," he'd say. Later on I reminded him, "We have nothing in common."

"We have things in common," he'd said. But I was so surprised to hear it that I forgot to ask, "What?" And I really wanted to know. If he took a shower first, at least it would be clean sweat. His reasoning is, then he'd have to take two showers in close succession. But so what? I'd just read that President Kennedy had had a shower fixation and took dozens of showers a day. Of all the things I'd admired about the President I would have admired that the most, had I known about it earlier in my lifetime infatuation with him and his memory. Now that I know, what can I do? I haven't recovered yet from watching every documentary shown for the last anniversary in November. That's what must have ushered in America's new spirit of defeat—watching him and then watching the new person. Just comparison of the two heads of hair is enough to bring about a sense of doom.

I decided to stay in my neighbors' kitchen until I couldn't stand the commotion any longer. That happened when the husband came in with some sports equipment so new and expensive that I couldn't even tell what it was. He'd rollerbladed home from playing tennis and doing some other activity involving a newfangled kind of sailing. So pieces of equipment from each sport were still on him, all modern and brightly colored. A couple who'd once tried to buy this house, for a lower price, were related to someone in Eisenhower's Cabinet. Their equipment would have been older and more worn. I knew who they were because another neighbor, an antique dealer who was losing his memory, or losing it just after imbibing, would tell me every day, "Did you know they're related to a secretary of something in Eisenhower's Cabinet?"

Members of the family had come into the kitchen and were looking for lunch. The housekeeper was making the

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tomato sauce while her mistress was slapping sandwiches together. Everyone pulled up chairs the way rustlers and cowhands do in movies. Plates of things were slammed around.

"This could be the best tomato I've ever had," my neighbor said, taking a dainty bite of her sandwich. "Go taste the rest of this one," she ordered me.

I got up and went over to the counter where the sharp knives were kept. I was always glad to get a chance at those knives. Just as I started to slice the remainder of the tomato the husband said, "Why don't I have any tomato on my sandwich?"

"Because you have a lobster-salad sandwich. I have only tomato on mine," his wife said.

"I don't see why that means I can't have tomato on my sandwich."

"Because I have tomatoes, you have lobster. That's the way it goes."

"I can't see why that means I can't have tomatoes. There are dozens on the counter."

"Here," I said, handing him a saucer with the tomato I had just sliced.

"Thank you," he said to me as he put the tomato slices on his sandwich. "By the way, would you give your husband tomatoes on his sandwich?"

"Otherwise it would be just bread and lettuce," I said. "Anyway, I should be going."

"O.K., darling," my neighbor said. "And let me know how you do with that farmer."

I CROSSED the lane onto the parched brown grass of our rented property. It certainly was ugly. A small, new tree seemed to be dying. I turned the hose on and put it at the bottom of the little tree even though it was against the rules to water during a drought. I figured I could run the water because of the extra showers my husband refused to take and also because of all the leftover water resulting from President Kennedy's life being cut short.

It was quiet in the kitchen. It was as hot and still as a room described in a book by Carson McCullers. There was nothing I wanted to do.

My husband appeared, clean and dressed. "I couldn't go that far today. My knee is still hurting. I just want a lettuce-and-tomato sandwich."

"Try this," I said, handing him a small tomato. "How do people have so much self-confidence?" I said.

"They're farmers. They don't think a lot."

"Not the farmers, the neighbors."

"Oh, them. I don't know," he said. Then in order to make me happy he added, "I wish I did." But I knew he wasn't interested in how people got to be the way they were, not even Dr. Loquesto, whose personality development I asked him to speculate on every week, or every day.

I stepped out onto the porch and looked around. There were no birds or butterflies. It was like a moment from "Silent Spring." "Let's go get birdseed," I called into the kitchen.

THE day after the tomatoes, both husbands left for cities. I went to the beach alone and decided to leave early to get to the farm on time.

I pulled up to the old red truck the farmers used as a stand. When I first met the woman farmer she was young and attractive and now she was not so young, but still attractive because of her life of constant physical exercise.

"Well, I haven't seen you in a long time," she said in a friendly way.

"We can't get here by six—that's our problem."

"What are you doing? At the beach all day?"

"No, just from four to six."

"What do you do before that?"

"Wait for it to cool off."

"What about in the morning?"

"We go bird-watching or on wildflower walks." The truth was I'd never accompanied my husband on his 6 A.M. bird-watches or nature walks, because I stayed up most of the night trying to photograph in the dark. I'd read that Maria Mitchell stayed up all night scanning the sky and making observations.

"I thought maybe you were angry about the snapdragons," she said.

"Why would I be angry?" I said. I wanted to skip right over that and feast my eyes upon the vegetables. I picked up a basket of cherry tomatoes and washed a few under the faucet so I could eat them.

"I ate a pint of those already," the farmer said. "Look at my lip." She showed me a blister. "That's from the acid," she said.

I ate a few more. "Are there any regular tomatoes?" I asked.

She pointed me to a secret place behind some trees. "I was saving those for tomorrow, but you can take some. Let's see," she said, inching around the crate. "How many do you need?"

"Ten or fifteen? How much are they, by the way?"

"How much do you want them to be?"

"That's up to you."

"How's two dollars a pound?"

"Whatever you want." I was ready to pay any price, get some corn, and make a quick exit.

I walked over to the corn stand, where I saw her younger son, who had suddenly gotten to be sixteen. He had his shirt off, and as I was staring at his chest, along came his father.

"Your son is all grown up," I said. "You're lucky he turned out to be such a nice boy." I meant it, too, not just about his physique.

"He's a lot better than I was at that age."

"Really? I wouldn't have thought that."

"I was sent to reform school even."

"I can't believe it."

"Well, all I did was, one winter back in Maine we broke into a guy's house. We didn't do much damage, but he was the only Jew in town and the case came up before a judge who was the only other Jew in town."

"What crime did you commit?" I asked. Suddenly I remembered that he was of German descent. It could have been any kind of crime in that case.

"Oh, knocked over a table that broke. It was just for fun."

I was gathering up some corn and squeezing the tips to see if worms had eaten them away. Peeking into corn was forbidden. But since the farmer was distracted by memories of his boyhood pranks I was able to look into a few ears and get all worm-free ones.

"Then I enlisted in the Army and got straightened out," he said.

"I never knew you were in the Army," I said.

" 'Catch-22' is my favorite book," he said.

"I wouldn't have guessed that," I said.

"Usually I like things with sex, but 'Catch-22' is the exception."

"It's one of my favorite books, too," I said, backing away.

"I don't read much," he said. "I'd rather watch girls play volleyball."

I started walking backward toward the tomato truck.

"Don't you want some bread?" he

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said. Then he surprised me by calling, "Man can't live by corn alone!"

THAT night I went across the lane with a supply of tomatoes and corn for my neighbor.

"I can't believe you would do this, you special, unique person! And you had no problem with the farmer, right? Here, taste this carrot cake."

"I can't. My stomach is sticking out."

"It is not! How could it be? It's an eighth of an inch out."

"Too many tomatoes. Too yin and watery."

"You could come to my gym—not that you need to."

"I can't stand the music."

"They don't play Mozart at gyms. No beat."

"They could play all allegrettos."

"It's just water weight. I can give you some of my diuretic."

"I have some herbal diuretic. Actually, it's corn-silk tea."

"You mean if I eat corn silk, it's diuretic?"

"No, pour boiling water over it and drink that. But do you want to get up all night to go to the bathroom?"

"It all depends on how depressed I am. Let me show you what I got at the health-food store in addition to my prescription diuretic from the drug store."

She handed me a bottle. It listed juniper, uva-ursi, marshmallow root, ginger root, and cramp bark.

"This isn't exactly a diuretic. It's for P.M.S.," I said.

"I can't believe they sold me this," my neighbor said. "You wouldn't let me give you some harsh chemical diuretic? It works right away. Did you hear what happened today? I'm awakened at 7 A.M. by a loud knock on the door. It's the sheriff or someone, with a document giving me a week to sign the release on the land near our house in Connecticut. I'm sick that I can't have it. And don't tell me I have so much. That hurts me deeply."

"Well, you have these two houses in the most beautiful parts of each town."

"I deserve more. I can have Scalamandré fabric in every room. I deserve whatever I want. My mother brought me up to believe that."

"My mother brought me up to believe the opposite."

"I'm entitled to whatever I want, and I want that land. I demand to see the purchase-and-sale agreement first. 'Where's the P. and S., I'd like to know?' I asked their lawyer. My dreams are out the window, my husband's doing nothing to get me what I want. Why did I marry this man?"

"I wish I had married Prince Charles," I said.

"I wish I had. Isn't he wonderful?"

"Not that wonderful. But at least we have things in common."

"I was available, too. What things?"

"Organic gardening, vegetarianism, hatred of modern architecture. And he paints watercolor landscapes." I remembered seeing a photograph of the Prince sitting on the Scottish moors with his paintbox. His cheeks were rosy and the cleated soles of his shoes were visible and perfectly clean. I'd read in an antique book, "What England Can Teach Us About Gardening," "We cannot be a pink-cheeked nation until America is one great garden as England is." These things came together in a way that made me wish for a life with the Prince.

My neighbor was still reviewing her marriage. "My other boyfriends had money, too, but they couldn't have helped children with homework. I married him because I care very deeply about the world of ideas. Not that you could tell from my life."

"You read a book this summer."

"I did? What was it? Come look at my carpet before you go. Can you believe they laid this carpet with the print upside-down?" I followed her into the Scalamandré-filled living room to the stairs. The youngest boy was sitting on the steps, and the dog was sleeping with its head on his lap.

"Can I take a picture of this?" I asked.

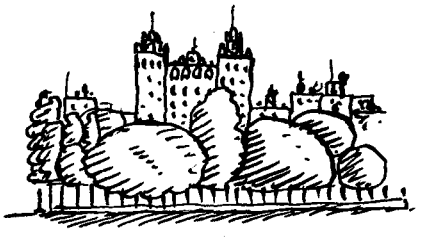
"Yes," the boy said.

"We have a thousand pictures. Look at the carpet pattern," his mother said.

"Maybe he'll never sleep this way again," her son said.

"He will, he will. Now, does this look like an upside-down fern frond or does it look geometric and abstract?"

"If you look closely, you can see the fern. If you ran up the steps, you wouldn't know what it was."



"Good, so I shouldn't do it over? Look at it the other way. Go upstairs."

I went upstairs and looked down the staircase. I was beginning to feel dizzy from the heat of the day, which was still trapped in the house. All the windows were closed. I wished I could go across the lane to our house, where all the windows were open and fans were on in all the rooms. "O.K., I see the fern now," I said.

"I should do it over, right?"

"If you want to see the fern."

"Come with me. I have a remnant, but it's more blue."

We walked down the hallway. On the way, I saw that everything matched everything else.

"Do you like the worn look, or the new carpet on the stairs?" she asked as she led me back. "Should I tear it up and get a worn Oriental runner?"

"This will get worn quickly with the children and the dog."

"But can I wait for the worn look? Would it be better to have it instantly? Would you look at this picture frame?"

I looked and saw a gold-leaf frame on a new sampler. "The plumber dropped this one and it has this crack in the paint. Now look at the matching one. Should I deduct from his bill and get a new one made?"

"No, get him to drop the other one the same way."

"It doesn't bother you?"

"No, it looks like a piece of molding I saw in Florence."

"But they don't match anymore. O.K., now let me unroll this carpet."

We went to her older sons' room. It was all dark green and navy blue. No wonder these boys were always in a bad mood. The room had been neatened up. I didn't see any *Playboy* magazines, but I could feel that they were hidden somewhere. Like a psychic gardener we had the misfortune to have for a while. "Did you see my sunglasses?" I once asked this gardener. "I feel they're between two layers of fabric," she said. But they were right out on the kitchen table. "Your skin is better than mine," she said on another occasion. "Only because you go in the sun," I said. "No," she said, "I've had several near-death experiences." After she drove off in her truck I realized I should have called out, "By the way, what were the near-death experiences?" Instead I called, "What about the buckwheat-hull mulch?" "I have

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all my suppliers searching for it," she said in a lying way.

But here in the dark room in Nantucket I kept wondering, Where do they stash the *Playboys*, even though I didn't want to know. I wanted to get on with the carpet viewing.

"Is the other fern more visible?" my neighbor asked.

I was kneeling on the floor and staring at the tiny fern. I no longer understood the pattern. The white stitch was outside the realm of the green stitch and didn't seem connected to it in any way. Was the gray part of the white, or was the green part of the gray? I couldn't tell.

"I don't understand in what way this is a fern, really," I said.

"You mean, so forget the whole thing and let it look geometric?"

"Now I can't remember what the other one looks like. Can we compare them?"

We left the room with a sample piece of carpet.

When we got to the staircase and put the piece next to the step, neither one looked like a fern anymore.

"I was wrong," I said. "There's hardly any difference."

"What would you do?"

"I don't have carpets. I have old rag rugs."

"I don't have your spirituality or aesthetics. I can't wait and collect things."

We went out the front door onto the steps. "Your roses need to be deadheaded," I said. "Look at how many new blossoms you can have."

"I asked for pink and they gave me white."

"I like the white. Maybe I'll clip them for you tomorrow."

I went across the lane to our empty house. The lights were on, but it didn't seem cheerful. What lay ahead for me? David Letterman and "Crossfire" were all I had to look forward to. Maybe I should have stayed and worked on the roses alone in the dark.

I turned around and started to go back. There was almost a full moon shining over the roses. I could see some stars but I couldn't locate the Big Dipper without my husband to point it out. It was just as well, because he'd get me started thinking about infinity and that always brings on a feeling of going insane. Then I stopped. Because on the other hand, why should I ever go back there again? I didn't fit in with family life. There had to be other places I could go instead. The house and observatory of Maria Mitchell, the first woman astronomer, were only a few blocks away. I remembered seeing the tiny nineteenth-century dress the astronomer wore as an infant. In her room was some lavender-blue wallpaper with little stars on it.

Was it the original wallpaper? Nobody knew, when I inquired. But how much could I learn from studying the Maria Mitchell birthplace and observatory? Maria and her relatives were no longer around. No tomatoes were being eaten there. Probably tomatoes were still thought to be inedible in the heyday of the first woman astronomer.

For twenty years I'd been trying to get down the road to revisit Maria Mitchell's house. That's where I'd fit in. I'd read that one night in October of 1847, when the astronomer was observing stars through a British-made telescope, "she recognized an unusual, bright object moving slowly across the sky." When her father climbed to the roof he confirmed that she had discovered a comet. "A group calling itself Women of America, exultant over her discovery, gave her a new telescope."

I could give up dealings with other people and confine myself to nightly observations of the sky and the world. Surely my discovery and photographs of Dr. Arnold Loquesto were as important as the discovery of a comet. Why didn't the group Women of America exult in my discovery and photographs of the surgeon and give me a new camera, or at least give him a new hysteroscope? A woman once did give me the Wallace Nutting book "Massachusetts Beautiful" out of gratitude for sending her to him. When I told the surgeon, he said, "You should have given it to me."

Probably the reason I didn't give it to him was that Massachusetts was no longer as beautiful, and he might feel bad. Things were different when Maria Mitchell lived in Nantucket. I'd read that Thoreau used to come and give lectures—Emerson and Melville, too. I bet they'd never discussed a purchase-and-sale agreement, or heard the nickname for it—the "P. and S." And there was no such term as "P.M.S." either. The other "p" word wasn't bandied about or allowed to be mentioned at all. I'd managed to go my whole life without saying it once.

Maybe that was the time of the world of ideas. But this was the new world. What kind of world was it? It was some other kind of world, and there was no escape. ♦

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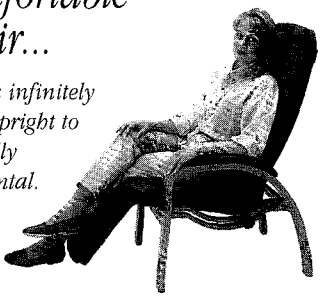

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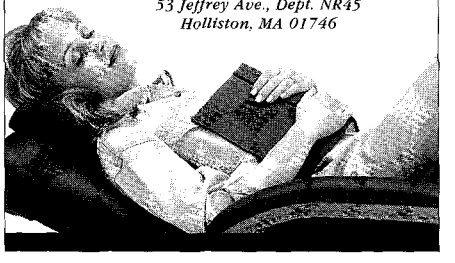

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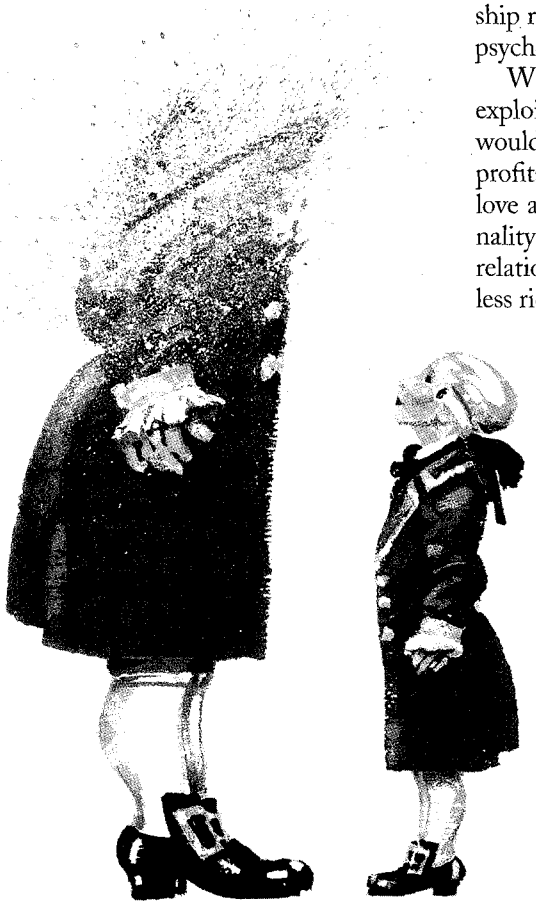
CHILD'S PLAY

Maynard Solomon examines the Mozarts: prodigy and stage father.

BY EDWARD W. SAID

"THE child Mozart," as Maynard Solomon, his latest biographer, aptly calls him, is the image of the composer that has entered Western civilization: no one was more precocious than he, no one more able from infancy to produce music with such extraordinary ease and of such astonishing quality. Solomon quotes Daines Barrington, the English scholar who witnessed the wunderkind's talents and then reported on them to the Royal Society: "Suppose then a capital speech in Shakespeare never seen before, and yet read by a child of eight years old, with all the pathetic energy of a Garrick. Let it be conceived likewise, that the same child is reading, with a glance of his eye, three different comments on this speech tending to its illustration; and that one comment is written in Greek, the second in Hebrew, and the third in Etruscan characters. . . . When all this is conceived, it will convey some idea of what this boy was capable of." Sight-reading, extended improvisation, transposing, playing blindfolded, writing down—note perfect—music that he had heard only once, identifying the pitch of any sound, all in addition to composing sonatas, chamber pieces, concertos, and even a couple of operas from the age of about five: Mozart's gifts bordered on the supernatural, and have remained unequalled.

Yet a mere recital of his feats brings us no closer to Mozart the human being. The language of music is both expressive and mysteriously elusive: a piano concerto by Mozart *says* nothing at all, and is only incidentally tied to the moment in his life when it was composed. Musicological analysis can describe changes in style, illustrate features of form and of the tonal palette, characterize the logic and the harmonic language of a work. The problem remains of connecting, in some meaningful way, the experiences of Mozart's life with the actual music he produced, revealing how the former somehow sustained and—to some degree, at least—can explain the latter. The great virtue of Maynard Solomon's massively documented "Mozart: A Life" (HarperCollins; $35) is that he has brought together Mozart's life and musical accomplishments more skillfully and intelligently than most of his predecessors in a compelling—indeed, often harrowing—synthesis. He begins not with the picture of consummate grace and supernal achievement to which Mozart's works have surely entitled him but with a curious absence in the record: the fact that Salzburg's most famous son seems to have been written out of both its collective and its official memory a decade before he died, in 1791, presumably as a punishment for his "voluntary migration" from the city's oppressive subjugation. Disinheritance becomes Solomon's clue to understanding Mozart, even "a precondition of his creativity." And, as Solomon develops his insight, the inner core of the composer's identity is shown to be bound up in his painfully complex relationship with his father, Leopold—who was himself a disinherited son with "an erotically tinged drive to dominate and a penchant for an almost Jamesian vicarious creativity." Solomon focusses on this father-son partnership and shows how it imprisoned the young Wolfgang Mozart creatively and personally in the older man's sphere as rebel and—here Solomon's ingenuity gives an audacious edge to his interpretation—as willing captive. Even after Mozart had begun his own family, the internalized relationship remained a constant in Wolfgang's psyche.



WALDEMAR SWIERZY

The internalized relationship between Leopold and Wolfgang remained a constant in the composer's psyche.

Were this partnership simply one of exploitative parent and clever child, it would not have endured so long, and so profitably, for both. It was predicated on love and admiration, not merely on venality and greed; in contrast, the boy's relationship with his mother was much less rich. Leopold was, of course, the organizer of his son and daughter's huge European tours; Solomon provides a staggeringly detailed portrait of the seven-year-old Wolfgang and the twelve-year-old Marianne, his pianist sister, as they trekked across the Continent "for three years, five months, and twenty days, and . . . traveled several thousand miles by coach, stopped in eighty-eight cities and towns (including repeat visits), and performed for audiences totaling many thousands." But if Leopold instigated his son's discovery of the world, he also instigated the boy's stunningly fluent gifts as a composer in the current neoclassical style—courtly, Italianate, conventional. Wolfgang's childhood, Solomon says, was a joint venture between

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"Your clock may be telling you to get married, but mine's telling me to have lunch."

• •

the son and the father. It gave both of them visibility and wealth, and it freed Leopold to live away from duties, both familial and professional, to which his modest attainments might have condemned him. The words "magical" and "miraculous" recur frequently as the prodigy (who seemed to enjoy the arduous performing schedule imposed on him) revealed more and more of his talents.

Inevitably, the boy wonder grew into a brilliant adolescent, and began to forge on his own an aesthetic voice through which to express his concerns and his inventiveness. Solomon, in his classic 1977 study of Beethoven, interrupted his narrative to note significant developments in the artist's style; he does this for Mozart with a singular discernment in a series of chapters that delineate the essential features of style, form, and rhetoric which give Mozart's sound its strikingly inimitable qualities—elegance, formal perfection, idiosyncratic inflections. What stamps these chapters with rare cogency is that they not only characterize with tact and skill the works of a given period but also ingeniously reveal the music's sources in Mozart's life at that time. The teen-ager's growing sense of independence, his explorations of Paris and Vienna prior to leaving Salzburg for good, his fidelity to the past combined with "a subversive cast of mind so subtly concealed in convention": all these color his Salzburg serenades and divertimenti, written for the archbishop's court between 1772 and 1776, and, to a lesser extent, his more traditional concertos and chamber works of the time.

Solomon lets us see Mozart establishing his creative individuality in these "social" works that "simultaneously represented the composer's ties to his community and his powerful attachment to feelings associated with pastoral and idyllic states of being." Idyllic and ironic at the same time, these relatively undiscussed compositions reflect the young man's attachment to his father (and thus tradition) and his own "anxiety of originality," which now allow him only the first venturings into "a deepened world of feeling." And as Mozart writes more of this music, with its courtly dances and lute simulations, he moves beyond aristocratic self-congratulation into "representations of an ideal pastoral world, even of the classical image of Arcadia itself, and what had been a readily consumable festive music linked to a particular celebration now becomes a stylistic resource of extraordinary affective range, celebrating broad areas of human experience, centering on nature, love, and play."

YET even after Mozart married Constanze Weber, in 1782, and moved to Vienna, he remained in bondage to his father, torn by dualities that had him vacillating between enjoyment and "a need to be dominated"—between the pleasures of adult freedom with a new family of his own and "the performance principle," which his father sternly supervised. Leopold was never resigned to his son's marriage, and took no interest in his son's children. (He was, however, able to pry Marianne's son little Leopold loose, and rear him, in a futile effort to re-create his original family.)

According to Solomon, the music of Mozart's maturity provides a record of the composer's gradually achieved sense of artistic sovereignty. This is magnificently evident in the C-Minor Mass

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(K.427/417a), which he wrote in 1782-1783 in part as a testimonial to his love for Constanze, and in which he at last sheds the "neo-classicist aesthetic" so dear to his father. Whereas his music had once reflected his being caught between "opposed effects" (Solomon provides a particularly informative analysis of the andante/adagio movements of the middle seventeen-seventies, works that convey the sorrow he felt at his mother's death and the disintegration of the family structure), during the middle seventeen-eighties he used music to place himself in a new line of succession, with Haydn as his conscriptive father substitute. He has moved away from piano works by around 1786, and embarked on a still more heightened Viennese career, as impresario and opera composer. His father dies in 1787; and his music takes on a new dimension of beauty, one laced through with a feeling for mortality that is "shockingly voluptuous," as the musician Charles Rosen called it, a mastery rather than a yielding. Intermittently, Solomon affords us persuasive descriptions of the mature works, where "the chaste, sublimated surface of Mozart's music conceals turbulent, potentially eruptive currents of feeling." Of the B-flat concerto (K.595) and the G-minor symphony (K.550), he writes:

> It perhaps is only when we feel the power of Mozart's music to bruise us that we can discover its enchanted healing powers as well. . . . We may follow the joyous path pursued by Mozart's play impulse, delighting in his antic disposition, marveling at his capacity for turning things inside out, for finding carnivalesque juxtapositions and endless possibilities, at every turn affirming the sheer vitality that inhabits the universes of sound inscribed on a state of silence that he brought into being.

Solomon points out a few other areas of relative freedom that Mozart was able to explore both in music and out of it: his frequently indulged penchant for luxury; for punning and often scatological language games; and for the Masonic order, which he looked to as a fulfillment of his desire for justice and rationality (and which informs "Die Zauberflöte," his penultimate opera). But the horizons of his life as a harried, money-short musician gradually darkened around him. Wolfgang was written out of his father's will, even though for most of his life he had been the family's mainstay and source of fi-

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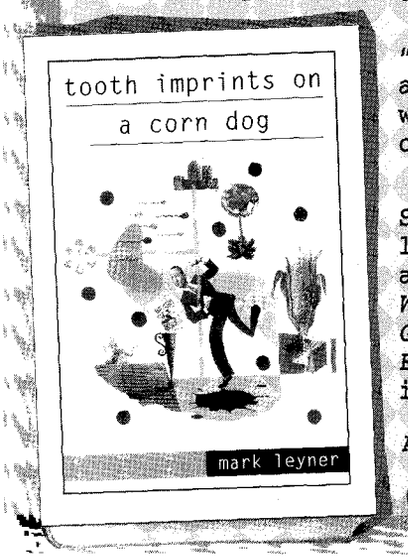

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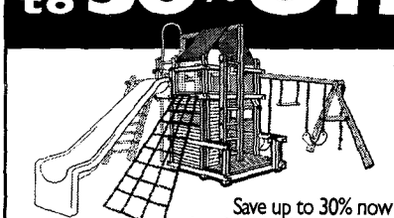

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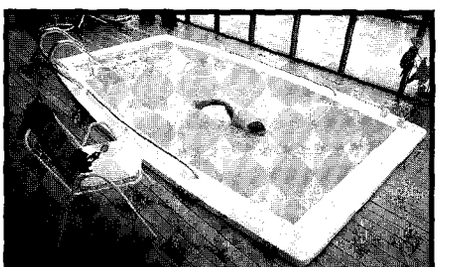

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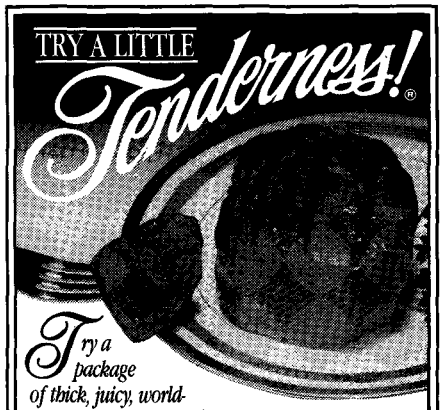

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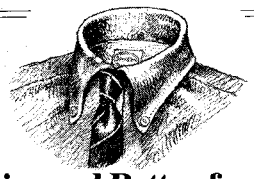

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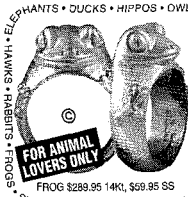

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nancial security. Marianne had chosen Leopold over Wolfgang in the continuing unravelling of the family romance, and Wolfgang's intimate connection with her, too, frayed over time. He suffered a serious depression in the late seventeen-eighties, accompanied by what appeared to be a diminishment of his creative powers. He was restored to almost miraculous productivity in 1789, though, with "Così Fan Tutte," the last—and, in my opinion, the greatest—of the operatic masterpieces he wrote with the librettist Lorenzo da Ponte.

Only two of Mozart's six children survived infancy, and he, too, was always in precarious health. He died, in his thirty-sixth year—an exhausted, and even a pathetic, man—in December, 1791, of acute rheumatic fever. Solomon definitively disposes of the notion that Mozart may have been the victim of a conspiracy; in addition, he provides adequate evidence that Mozart's humble funeral was the result neither of extreme penury nor of general neglect. Most Viennese citizens opted for what were then called "3rd class" burials, and, besides, it is likely, Solomon suggests, that Mozart actually wanted burial without a coffin as an "emblem of his beliefs"—a way of asserting "the brotherhood of souls, equal in death as they should have been in life."

I DO not know a musician's biography as satisfying and as moving as this one. True, Solomon's obsession with getting all the details down leaves the reader dizzy after uninterrupted infusions of long, sometimes tedious, lists of ducats and florins, of cities and people, and of Köchel numbers. He occasionally has a tendency to overinterpret, as in his fanciful speculations on Mozart's invention of "Adam" as one of his wedding-document names, and to overreact, as when for far too many pages he rummages excitedly through Mozart's not particularly interesting "Excerpts from the Fragments of Zoroaster," a set of verbal riddles and proverbs written in 1786. Such lapses, however, are offset by fascinating anecdotes: Mozart often spoke in recitative; he loved sumptuous and sometimes gaudy clothing (in particular a bright-red coat with gold buttons); he had "a marked antipathy to France"; his letters to his cousin Maria Anna Thekla are like "a thesaurus gone mad"; until he was nine, he had an irrational fear of trumpets.

There is an unfailingly humane and generous spirit at work in this long and absorbing volume. Rarely have social and political analyses been so effectively joined to psychoanalytic probings (inspired by Freud, Melanie Klein, D. W. Winnicott, and Paul Ricœur) as they are in Solomon's hands; and I have encountered nothing that is quite like the detailed charting of so profound a genius as Mozart's, especially as that genius interacts with the nourishing, and psychologically debilitating, relationship with Leopold. Far from being presented as a relentless list of wounds and complexes, the familial bond is seen as a condition of both men's humanity. "In the end," Solomon says of their attempts to break loose from each other, "a father and a son, trembling within a conflicting welter of disquieting emotions, weighed the compensations of their respective rebellions, wondered if they could have acted otherwise, tried to conceal their wounds, and were powerless to change course."

The real tests of a composer's biography, however, are whether the music is somehow made more clear by it and whether a narrative life actually helps us to interpret the music in a new way. Solomon succeeds handsomely in both respects. Although he has obviously benefitted from previous scrutinies of Mozart's work (most notably Charles Rosen's "The Classical Style"), he shows us the music as emerging from the deepest recesses of the man's spirit, its formal and stylistic characteristics the result both of a highly disciplined and institutionalized "classical" aesthetic and of personal impulses, psychological stresses. It is impossible now to listen to the "Haffner Serenade," say, and not recall the idea of Mozart's trying to use a hackneyed form to pull away from his father's orbit and create a choreography of ironic, albeit "correct," pastoral gestures; or to the C-Major Piano Concerto (K.415) and not note that the "military style boldly moves to annex Viennese classicism as part of its theater of operations." Moreover, no one before Solomon has explained the haunting, often surprising alternation of major and minor modes in even a "simple" piece like the C-Major Piano Sonata (the

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bane of every beginning piano student) and the way in which Mozart undermines "the rococo surface as though to subvert not only the vision of tranquillity, but the aristocratic order it is customarily intended to validate." In reading Solomon, we come to know not so much a transformed as an *inevitable* Mozart, ever the miraculous creator but also the considerable human being, unsurpassably impressive and somehow closer at hand. ♦

DOWN BY LAWS

Can common sense really cure the legal system?

BY CARLIN ROMANO

FIRST, kill all the law-bashers. Then sever the connection between law and O.J., law and L.A., law and your unpaid parking tickets, law and any municipal regulation you despise, law and every social entitlement you oppose, law and the lingering tax due on your nanny, law and anything that ruins your day. Only then might law win an abatement from its role as democracy's final scapegoat. Is there any artifact of civilization so mocked by those who should support it?

Philip K. Howard

TOM BACHTELL

Last year's most consistently praised novel, William Gaddis's "A Frolic of His Own," offered us the Crease family's crackpot lawsuits as a reductio ad absurdum of our hyperlitigious society. And Mary Ann Glendon's recent "A Nation Under Lawyers: How the Crisis in the Legal Profession Is Transforming American Society" suggests that most of America's eight hundred thousand lawyers—judges, attorneys, and law professors alike—are going to the Hell that Dante prepared for them. In the last quarter century, she finds, the bench has become arrogant, activist, and policy-mad, engaged in an "orgy of legal hubris." Glendon, the Learned Hand Professor of Law at Harvard, calls for a return to "the habit of critical, ongoing, reasoned reflection on the contents of common sense."

"Common sense": it's a tricky notion, as historians know. To Enlightenment thinkers, it stood for vulgarity and ignorance. The Italian philosopher Vico labelled it "judgment without reflection, shared by an entire class, an entire nation, or the entire human race." Somerset Maugham acidly derided it as "another name for the thoughtlessness of the unthinking," composed of "the prejudices of childhood, the idiosyncrasies of individual character and the opinion of the newspapers." But it's the colloquial and laudatory meaning of the phrase that fuels the latest anti-law polemic, Philip K. Howard's "The Death of Common Sense: How Law Is Suffocating America" (Random House; $18).

A partner in a New York City law firm, Howard specializes in leaps of faith from anecdotes about burdensome regulations to less than compelling generalizations about rules, rights, and legal excess. He begins with the 1988 tale of Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, who wanted to convert an abandoned Bronx building into a homeless shelter. They gave up because the municipal code required the installation of an elevator, an added hundred-thousand-dollar cost. "No person decided to spite Mother Teresa," Howard writes. "It was the law." He also shakes his head at the "two-fire-engine" rule in model new-housing codes, which requires streets to be fifty feet wide, arguably reducing "human interaction." And the New York State fire-code restrictions on hanging children's art in schools. And OSHA's more than four thousand regulations (a

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hundred and forty on wooden ladders alone). And the expansion of the Federal Register, the bible of new and proposed regulations, from "15,000 pages in the final year of John F. Kennedy's presidency to over 70,000 in the last year of George Bush's." Federal statutes and formal rules "now total about 100 million words." Of course, the quality of these rules—for instance, the designation of bricks as a poison, or lime sludge as a hazardous waste—is as much an issue as the quantity of them. Indeed, indignation at statutory ineptness is the book's predominant emotion—an emotion shared by voters and politicians in both parties today. You see it as much in Al Gore's "Reinventing Government" plan as in Governor George Pataki's Inaugural blast against the spirit of Albany past. Or, for that matter, in two bills recently passed by the House—one that would place a one-year moratorium on most new federal rules, and one that would require health, safety, and environmental regulation to meet cost-benefit tests. Yet the weakness of Howard's book stems from the way he expands his argument into an attack not simply on bad law but on black-letter law itself.

Unlike Glendon, whose distaste for current legal practice stems from her tradition-minded view that lawyers do not adequately defer to the law, Howard worries that we've become entirely too passive before legislation and rule-making. As he sees it, the current American legal system grew out of a "philosophy of rationalism" that seeks to anticipate and cover every eventuality. Modern American law has become overweening in its ambition for "a perfectly calibrated machine of precise obligations and rights." Indeed, for today's legislators "making rules as precise as possible has become almost a religious tenet." As a consequence, he argues, we live under the thumb of "the world's thickest instruction manual," a regime in which printed prescription supplants human discretion, and yet "the more precise the rule, the less sensible law seems to be." So New York loses a homeless shelter because an elevator requirement is imposed on missionaries who eschew the device: just the first of a thousand bureaucratic inanities that Howard has gathered.

One key result of the legal system's quest for certainty, Howard insists, is that "in the decades since World War II, we have constructed a system of regulatory law that basically outlaws common sense." Then, there's the problem of legal process run amok, exemplified by the twenty-eight years it took the Food and Drug Administration to test about two hundred food-color additives. In Howard's view, process "has become an end in itself." Even worse, "justifying the fairness of the process has become more important than the goal"—an inclination he ties to Max Weber's belief that rationalist bureaucracy "must always satisfy 'formal equality of treatment.' " Finally, there's the damage wrought by the contemporary concept of a right, which amounts to an entitlement often based on sex, ethnicity, or physical disability. "Rights are not the language of democracy," he argues. "Compromise is what democracy is about." But rights frustrate compromise, and "leave no room for balance." Howard doesn't want to eliminate the concept altogether. Rather, he'd prefer to see rights restricted to traditional protections of citizens against the government, "rights *against* law."

The outcome of these three developments is that American government, and thus American life, is a mess. Government "acts like some extraterrestrial power, not an institution that exists to serve us," Howard writes. "Its actions have an arbitrary quality: It almost never deals with real-life problems in a way that reflects an understanding of the situation." As a corrective, he favors the version of "effective government" advanced by James M. Landis in the nineteen-thirties: one that "attracts the best possible people and gives them leadership responsibility." After all, he says, "responsibility, not process, is the key ingredient to action."

ALAS, Howard's solution, an oligarchic Contract with America ("You're in good hands with good leaders"), fails, because his legal generalizations finally don't cohere. What we get instead is corporate-lawyer crankiness masquerading as philosophy of law. But then scarcely any civic frustration arises in American culture today that is not resolved, sooner or later, in a one-sided book. "The Death of Common Sense" is Son of "Illiberal Education"—and Son of all those other jeremiads, on the right and on the left, that eschew balance in favor of rhetorical fervor. Everyone knows the recipe by now: Take a couple of boxes of Nexis-fresh outrages, add quotations from deep thinkers, and stir a controversy. But, while Howard's sweeping claims make for rousing reading, they often don't withstand careful scrutiny. "Loopholes only exist because of precise rules," he declares. "The Constitution, a short document of general principles, has no loopholes." Blacks, women, and

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many others might differ on that point regarding the original Constitution; conservatives, right-to-lifers, and die-hard E.R.A. types are among those who might take issue with it now.

Time and again, he castigates rules without considering what their rationale might be. Thus he mocks New York City rules that specify how restaurants may wash dishes and utensils without pausing to consider how matters of public health might factor in. He goes on to claim that new rights—like those protecting minorities and the handicapped—are examples of permanent and "open-ended power." But they're not—which is something he himself acknowledges when he notes that "the lines easily blur" between the language of rights and the language of legal obligation. "A philosopher," he observes, "will say that rights and obligations are two sides of the same coin." Exactly. That's why his dire warning that rights are forever carries no weight. Like policies, rights can be rolled back if the political will exists. They are simply a particularly strong and settled form of policy, and the political will arrayed against them can range from voting, public service, and legislative action to revolutionary opposition. One has to look only at the right to own slaves or the right to exploit child labor to see the fallacy in Howard's alarmism. For that matter, rights aren't as inimical to compromise as he imagines: judges routinely balance rights against other interests, including, of course, other rights.

Similarly, Howard ties himself into knots when he tries to argue both that excessive regulatory precision eliminates discretion and judgment, and that nefarious federal officials can twist any language to "get" corporate no-goodniks. He writes that the jurisdiction of the regulator leaves "ample room" for "meanness or abuse"—that "at the edges of the words there are always interpretations . . . that make it possible for the regulator to deny your request." But, if such wiggle room remains, the regulator can also *approve* your request. On the one hand, Howard complains that administrators have been denied discretionary power, while, on the other, he complains that they're abusing it.

In any event, the examples Howard offers don't persuade one that bureaucrats handle freedom wisely. He lobbies for an administrative approach similar to the one that governs Britain's Inspectorate of Pollution; it is simply directed, he reports, to reduce pollution "by the best means practicable." A Stateside analogue exists here, too, he suggests: "The Federal Reserve Board sets monetary policy with virtually no constraints. The Comptroller of the Currency certifies banks as healthy based on standards like 'safety and soundness.' They look at each situation in context, and are considered highly effective." If you think this sort of approach is "highly effective," try a Nexis search on "S. & L. debacle."

THE mark of "common sense" in any culture is that it tends to be tacit, assumed, unchallenged for the moment. Common sense over the centuries has included the views that blacks should be subjugated, heretics burned, women oppressed, animals prosecuted for murder. One reason for favoring law over "common sense" is that law is by its nature *explicit*. The more explicit that judgments of any kind are, especially in a democracy, the more reasonable they're likely to be, because their public, articulated nature exposes them to criticism, argument, adjustment, and rethinking. The answer to bad law, then, is not common sense but better law. Distinguishing between bad law and bad lawyers, Glendon writes:

> The rule of law is no empty formula: it's a set of institutionalized, time-tested principles that are nothing if not realistic about human nature. Toward the end of minimizing official arbitrariness and securing reasonably stable conditions for social and political life, it proclaims: that law is preferable to the use of private force as a means of resolving disputes; that executives, legislators, and judges are all subject to the law and are to be held accountable if they violate it; that official decisions must be grounded in preestablished principles of general application; and that no citizen can be deprived of freedom or goods except in accordance with due procedural safeguards.

It's this regime that Howard believes is "suffocating America," and should be supplanted by "good people" with discretionary powers and the ability to exercise them with unfailing good judgment. The trouble is, less law has rarely led to better bureaucrats, and Howard's "common sense" recommendation merely invites a state ruled by bureaucrat-despots. "Thinking in extremes might be our national disease," he says. "The Death of Common Sense" offers us a case in point. ♦

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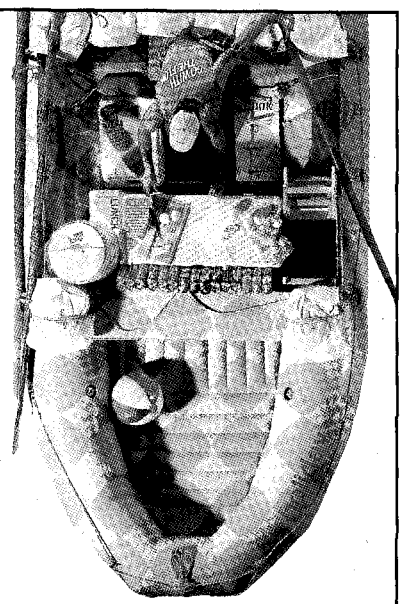

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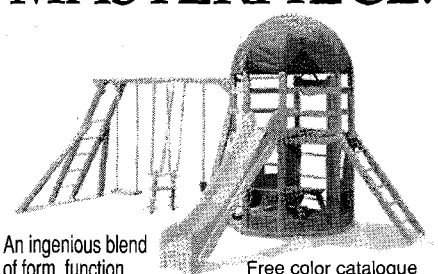

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RECOMMENDED READING

Come and Go, Molly Snow
by Mary Ann Taylor-Hall
(Norton; $21)

Molly was five when her mother's attention strayed for a moment—just long enough for Molly to meet with a fatal accident. It sends her mother, understandably, over the edge, but not so far over that she entirely forgets the driving ambition of her life: to be the best bluegrass fiddler possible. One doesn't see clearly what this novel is about until the end, but one's interest is consistently held by the sheer wealth of feeling that the author's mellow prose sets flowing through the pages.

Transforming Paris: The Life and Labors of Baron Haussmann
by David P. Jordan
(Free Press; $28)

The man who rebuilt Paris in the nineteenth century was greatly admired by New York's urban renewer of the twentieth, Robert Moses; the two men shared an ambition to keep traffic moving, along with such traits as arrogance and authoritarianism. While Jordan does not overestimate Haussmann, he does show that the filth in which Paris wallowed in 1853, when Haussmann was appointed prefect of the Seine, demanded the works of sanitation that Haussmann provided, and that the avenues he opened created a city life that attracted tourists. Jordan notes that although Haussmann destroyed much of Gothic Paris, his twentieth-century successors have been far more thoroughgoing in eradicating the past.

Erskine Caldwell: The Journey from Tobacco Road
by Dan B. Miller
(Knopf; $30)

Caldwell's career epitomizes American letters in his day (1903-87), encompassing the avant-garde of the nineteen-twenties, the radicalism of the thirties, and the paperback "revolution" of the forties; Caldwell wrote for the movies, fought off obscenity prosecution, and lost an agent to McCarthyism. This account of the making and unmaking of a literary reputation persuasively suggests that "Tobacco Road" and "God's Little Acre" deserve a fresh look.

Out of Egypt
by André Aciman
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $20)

The author was not quite fourteen when the Nasser government, having expropriated his father's textile factory, expelled his family, a clan of prosperous, quirky Sephardic Jews, from Egypt. With beguiling simplicity, he recalls the life of Alexandria as they knew it, and the seductiveness of that beautiful, polyglot city permeates his book.

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QUARTET'S PROGRESS

The Kronos Quartet's up-to-the-minute traditionalism at BAM.

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

IN the world of the string quartet, a piece by Mendelssohn is a daring program choice, and the old one-way line of communication, from composer to performer to audience, is firmly in place. Players are expected to gain insight into the music from long consideration, and when we go to a quartet concert we expect to be offered, in turn, the garnered fruits of experience.

Not so in San Francisco. For the past decade and more, the Kronos Quartet has been trying to build a life for itself outside tradition, a life in which fancy clothes, lighting, and amplification are part of the act—though the idea that these things make the Kronos the rock group of the recital circuit is a bit excessive. For one thing, you can't project a giant image unless you have a giant response from your audience—not the mild-mannered, far from full BAM Majestic Theatre that greeted the ensemble at all but the first of four New York concerts last month. For another, the Kronos's lighting is mostly rudimentary and crass, a matter of soft suffusions and cheap designs. At the concerts I attended (I had to miss the last), it worked only for George Crumb's "Black Angels," a piece that ghoulishly dribbles at any hope of vulgarity, and La Monte Young's "Chronos Kristalla," whose accompanying magenta haze, designed by Marian Zazeela, was, as always when these artists work together, the music's harmonious second self. As for the amplification, I wish more groups would use it when they take chamber music out of the chamber. The serious objections, as with the lighting, concern what the Kronos does with technology rather than the fact that it employs it at all. For instance, feedback noise could be avoided, and we shouldn't have to lose so much of the rougher edge of the sound.

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traditional decision, which concerns repertory. Of the works played at BAM, the Crumb, dating from 1970, was by far the oldest; everything else had been written for this group, and written during the past few years. The whole nature of the quartet—as ensemble, as work, as medium, as world—is changed. Composers who write for the Kronos are writing in the context not of Haydn and Beethoven but of Philip Glass and Henryk Górecki. (Mr. Glass was represented in these concerts by quite the charmingest work of his I know: his Fifth Quartet, which implies that he's becoming Le Seventh of Les Six, and which the Kronos has recorded, on Nonesuch 79356, together with his less charming quartets.)

The irony of the Kronos aesthetic is that the performers abjure their own tradition and at the same time search eagerly for other people's. But this is an irony deeply ingrained in Western habits at the moment, and so one can't think badly of them for manifesting it. On the contrary, their case and their progress may provide keen examples to all of us as we think ourselves through the pathways of cultural hegemonies, conflicts, and junctures. The Kronos can't entirely forget its origins: even if it doesn't play any of the usual repertory, it's a great quartet, and great quartets are Western things. However, the effort to forget—an effort surely impelled by eminently rational and laudable worries about the West's poor record of cultural humility—can lead to a spineless, tension-free prostration, which has its musical reflection when, instead of engaging in dialogue with another culture, the Kronos simply accompanies.

Ali Jihad Racy's "Zaman Suite" was typical in its frustrations. Mr. Racy, performing on instruments from his native Middle East, is evidently a virtuoso; so is his percussionist partner, Souhael Kaspar. But the two of them were musically cramped and visually distanced by being set with the quartet, and the quartet added little more than Westernizing harmonizations. Where the Kronos's recordings of Berg and Webern show a suavity of glissando that makes atonality sound like Viennese blues, in Mr. Racy's piece its pitching was constrained by caution. What we heard was music for a Lebanese restaurant.

There are alternatives. There are ways for the Kronos to carry more of its Western quartet culture with it, and for its engagements with other cultures to be not dull homogenizations but discoveries of musical places beyond anything previously found. Mr. Young's work and Tan Dun's "Ghost Opera," pointing in totally different directions, demonstrated such ways and such discoveries.

Mr. Young's deep, long involvement with Indian music and thought has produced a body of work that makes no direct references outside itself, and which certainly couldn't be played with much hope of success in restaurants of any kind. "Chronos Kristalla" ("Time Crystals," he explains, though the Greek's not perfect) uses just eight notes, all natural harmonics, in what the score reveals to be a succession of variants on a theme, interspersed with groups of chords. However, because the tempo is so reduced that each note or chord lasts for several seconds, or even minutes, any melodic profile or harmonic urge is diffused, and one hears a slow alternation of similar events, like the breathing of an enormous, gentle animal—or, to pursue the composer's own analogy, like the long drones of the sho, the Japanese mouth organ, because these pure, glistening tones are being sustained without vibrato. The work, which plays continuously for ninety minutes, must be exhausting to perform. It's exhausting to hear.

Mr. Young's music is less testing when it allows the listener to set the pace, as it does at his and Ms. Zazeela's current installation, at 275 Church Street, open on Thursdays and Saturdays from 2 P.M. until midnight. If you go in the evening, you can spot the location from across the street, by the purplish glow coming through three third-story windows. (In Ms. Zazeela's work, magenta and blue are the two primary colors, and there aren't many others.)

Unlike Mr. Young's quiescent quartet, this installation work—whose title begins "The Base 9:7:4 Symmetry in Prime Time" and would stretch to the end of the paragraph if I were to let it—has an intensive, perpetual boom and thrill. You think as you walk up the stairs that there must be some heavy manufacturing plant in that purple room, but the door opens and there's just the light, and eight calligraphic shadow shapes of blue and red across the walls, and loudspeakers drumming out bundles of frequencies, from a stutter around ten cycles per second up to high tones that glance across the ear like fine glass rods. The sound is being produced constantly and unchangingly, but the experience of it changes as you move, because the different frequencies resonate at different points in space. As you walk around, you can track different pathways through the dazzling labyrinth of tones. It's a magical place.

And magic was in the air when the Kronos gave the first performance of Mr. Tan's "Ghost Opera." Where Mr. Young throws out everything and listens to what's left, Mr. Tan is a great includer. In combining the quartet with a player on the pipa, or Chinese lute (the phenomenally agile Wu Man), he was doing no more than accord with the Kronos style, but it was his own decision to bring in theatre, a Bach quotation, speech, other vocalizations, inarticulate but vigorous, and the sounds of stirred and dripping water, tapped stones, and rustled paper. More surprising than the variety is the fact that all the bits balance, as in a mobile. (An exception, lopsided, might be the repeated idea that doesn't seem sure if it's supposed to be a Beethoven theme.) The dramatic format is a help, in loosening the medium, but Mr. Tan's success depends, too, on instinct, skill, and selectivity. Nothing but instinct could have told him just where to place so many disparate events. Nothing but skill could have enabled him to combine, in one of the work's most striking moments, a C-sharp-minor prelude by Bach with a Chinese folk song. And nothing but a ruthless selectivity could have insured that everything here resonates. We were hearing the piece for the first time, but it was as if we had always known it: the primal sounds of stone on stone, water on water, the scrap of Bach that seemed not so much music as the memory of music, belonging, in the way the Kronos played it, to a past age of performance. Here was the broadening sense of tradition to which these musicians aspire. ♦

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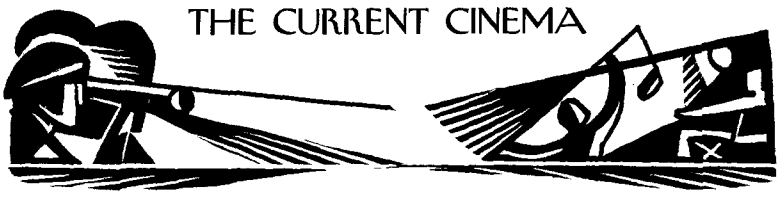

BALKAN HOMECOMING

"Before the Rain" and "The Quick and the Dead."

BY ANTHONY LANE

IT isn't often that you can go up to friends and say, "Hey, guess what, I just saw this cool Macedonian movie!" Here's your chance. "Before the Rain," which is written and directed by Milcho Manchevski, has picked up an Academy Award nomination for Best Foreign Picture; there are plenty of slicker works gunning for Oscars, but none more impassioned or wiser to the perils of passion. It also happens to be instructive, although, since it deals with the niceties of Balkan politics, you should be warned that "instructive" means "likely to leave you twice as confused as you were when you entered the theatre." The plot is divided into three parts, which makes it notably more coherent than Macedonia itself—the only patch of the former Yugoslavia, incidentally, where American ground troops are serving with the United Nations peacekeeping force. If they have any idea what's going on, good for them.

Rade Serbedzija and Katrin Cartlidge in Milcho Manchevski's "Before the Rain."

ANDREA VENTURA

When the action begins, it doesn't feel like action at all. We find Kiril (Gregoire Colin), a young Orthodox monk, happily tending his tomatoes in the middle of nowhere. The landscape around him could be the background of a Giotto—cool blue heavens, mammoth gray rocks that seem to fold and pile on top of one another instead of jutting out. Manchevski lingers over all this beauty just long enough to make us dream of timelessness, of a country adrift from history, and then snaps his fingers and cuts the idyll dead. Time starts up: a bunch of small boys torture a tortoise and cry "Go, Ninja Turtle!" In Kiril's monastery, the monks' chanting rises like smoke in the dome, as it has always done, but the frescoes around them are lurid with plague and torment, and the camera soon catches a pair of boots on the threshold of the church, announcing the arrival of armed thugs. Although it's easy to let this kind of crosscutting turn mannered and sarcastic, Manchevski's style has the force of a warning. His movie is so lustrous that it could easily have turned into a hymn to the motherland, or a simple plea for togetherness; but he avoids the temptation. It is romantic prejudice, after all, or that callous outgrowth of it known as nationalism, which has got his country into such trouble.

Kiril has taken a vow of silence, but he snorts with shock when he returns to his cell, lies down on the bed, and finds a girl in the way. She is Zamira (Labina

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Mitevska), a member of the Albanian minority, and the thugs are looking for her. She killed one of their relatives—with a *pitchfork*, it turns out. One shudders to think what he was trying to do to her. From this one infectious act—which, like the offstage wellspring of a Greek tragedy, we never see—the entire story roots and spreads. When the monks discover Kiril and Zamira together, the two are sent out into the world to make their own way. But they don't get far; Zamira falls into the bosom of her family, and the welcome there is even more viperous than it is elsewhere.

This first section closes with the sound of a storm, which melts into the hiss of a shower, under which a young woman is raining tears—the start of Part Two. This is typical of Manchevski: he doesn't just make connections but floods you from one narrative to the next, spooling together lines and images that have only the faintest kinship. We are now in London, dropped without warning into the life and loves of Anne (Katrin Cartlidge), who appears at first to have nothing to do with Kiril and Zamira. Slowly, the details sharpen: Anne has fallen for Kiril's uncle, a bear-shaped photographer named Aleksandar (Rade Serbedzija), and he asks her to accompany him to glorious Macedonia—not so much a vacation, more a way of life. Somehow, she manages to spurn this delightful offer, choosing instead to go out to dinner with her estranged and wimpish husband. They settle down to a cozy argument, but gradually realize that their fracas is just a warmup act. The main attraction is a bearded customer who shouts at a waiter, leaves the room, and then returns to drive home his point with a pistol. The editing here is a great lesson in the art of mood-cooking: Manchevski increases the pace of his cutaway shots until the surrounding anxiety starts to shimmer, and you find yourself narrowing your eyes and preparing for the flash point. Odd, really, because you don't actually believe it for a second. After all, where *is* this place? Can I book ahead? Most London restaurants swoon with excitement if you break your tooth on a bread stick.

This middle section of "Before the Rain" is by far the weakest; the dialogue stiffens up, and for a while you can smell the self-importance rising from the movie. And I think we've had enough of photographer heroes, with their automatic guilt trip about detachment versus responsibility. Manchevski doesn't need to lay his moral worries before us for our inspection; most of his film is so skilled that we can glimpse them out of the corner of our eye. Fortunately, Serbedzija is far too strong and confident an actor to let a few lumpen lines get in his way; he turns Aleksandar into something richer than a case study in professional tension. The man's cares seem bound up with his lusts; as he drives himself toward danger, he starts to look like a one-man state—snared in history, shaggy with appetite, mauling Anne in the back of a London taxi. The sheer bulk of him takes over the movie; it comes as no surprise when, at the start of the final section, he flies back to Macedonia, bringing the plot home.

The last forty minutes or so of this movie are as tight and luminous as anything you'll see onscreen this year. Details double back on themselves, tying knots that you can't quite unpick. When a sour, Chekhovian veterinarian delivers a lamb and tries to wash off the blood and afterbirth, muttering, "Will these hands ne'er be clean?," you can't help recalling a casual exchange from the second part of the movie: Anne is discussing the trials of the heart with her mother, who says, "Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all." The film is crammed with people not understanding one another, or not wanting to, and this flicker of a shared culture, scraps of Shakespeare tossed up on either side of a continent, gives you a sudden, ridiculous stab of civilized hope. Other conjunctions are harder to spot; for instance, the climax of "Before the Rain" seems to take place *ahead* of the opening scenes, but I'm still not sure. Manchevski isn't fooling around with chronology merely for effect; he's not trying to be difficult, although he is suggesting that the experience of people such as Zamira and Aleksandar is itself so emotionally difficult that they can barely make sense of it. A brother shoots a sister in the back; a local half-wit, leaning against a mule, is handed a gun and told to join a manhunt; a village divides down the middle, Orthodox Macedonian against Albanian Muslim. That sounds too heavy for an evening at the pictures, I know, but Manchevski takes the situation and distills its dramatic spirit until he arrives at a pure, almost lightweight image: Aleksandar, with a plastic bag of presents from the West, crossing enemy lines to see a former sweetheart. He is stopped by gunmen on the path to her house; around him, little boys grin at the promise of public violence; eventually, he is allowed past. While her father accepts the gift of a Zippo, her son, less courteously, offers to slit the visitor's throat.

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Something extraordinary keeps happening in these encounters. The air thickens from tranquil to threatening. A pleasant afternoon turns muggy with foreboding, then slackens off again. It's an instinctive, climatic kind of moviemaking that I haven't seen since "Padre Padrone" and the other early Taviani pictures. When Aleksandar steps off a bus and strolls toward his village, the pastoral peace lasts for a full minute, until a cocky teen-ager jabs a rifle at him. Aleksandar relieves him of the weapon, slaps him for good measure, then goes strolling on; the whole sequence unfolds so swiftly, with so little fuss, that the camera seems to be feeding off the hero's lived-in, unshowy cool. You watch it and think that the director must be the same age as Aleksandar; the movie has that witty, middle-aged preference for manageable hopes over grand illusions, and a scorn for sentimental overload. Faced with a death scene, Manchevski behaves more like a doctor than like a director, using his camera to note the fly pattering over the victim's chest, the touch of blood on the fringe of the bedspread, and the kid agog in the doorway. (All this makes it surprising to learn that he is in fact thirty-five, and that he won an MTV award in 1992 for his music video of a rap song by Arrested Development.) With its flashes of rapture and its groundswell of good sense, "Before the Rain" is a movie that doesn't even dream of solving, or dissolving, the nightmares in the former Yugoslavia—it just shows a few people trying to behave decently and getting nothing for their pains except more pain. Of the four main characters, only two survive. Of the minor figures, many are willing to fight and die in order to belong, yet they hang around in such a brittle, dazed way that you wonder if they belong anywhere. There's no place like home.

"THE QUICK AND THE DEAD" stars Sharon Stone as a mysterious gunslinger who rides into the town of Redemption and squares off against a local bully named Herod. All of which should make it clear that here is a deeply unserious picture, whose most pressing concern is to show us what Sharon Stone looks like in leather pants. She looks just fine, but the attempt to clothe her in Clint Eastwood restraint is a lousy fit. Given that Stone also co-produced the picture, it's amazing to see how often she dawdles on the sidelines, content to watch a selection of other sharpshooters chew the dust. In some performers, such modesty might be becoming; in Stone, it's a waste of time, because her round-the-clock task in life is to stand and glow like a lighthouse while the male species breaks up on the rocks around her. Thus far, only "Basic Instinct" has allowed her to fulfill this sacred duty. "The Quick and the Dead" goes so far in the other direction that at one point she wakes up in someone's bed *without having had any sex.* I don't get it. Where's the fun in that?

The someone is Leonardo DiCaprio, who must be feeling shortchanged, the poor sap. With his piano-wide smile, DiCaprio is well on his way to the held-back cockiness of the young Jack Nicholson, and it's hard to see how he can veer away from stardom now, although failing to stay awake for Sharon Stone is as good a way as any. He plays the young pretender in a shootout competition; other entrants include Lance Henriksen, Russell Crowe, and Gene Hackman (who, as usual, lends ballast to a wavering project). The plot is linear to the point of dullness—who will be left alive when the smoke has cleared?—but the director, Sam Raimi, is enthusiastic to the point of lunacy. He came to fame with the "Evil Dead" series: cheap, silly flicks that made you retch rather than jump. (Why do moviemakers persist in thinking that gore is frightening? It isn't much of anything, apart from viscous.) Raimi is basically a comic director who prowls around looking for vulnerable genres that he can rip off, and "The Quick and the Dead" is right up his alley. The movie offers endless parodies of the Sergio Leone style: long, dusty pauses before the draw; closeups of staring eyes and wet brows, framed on the diagonal for added tackiness; a bullet hole drilled so cleanly into a man's body that the sun streams gently through. In its whooping, foot-to-the-floor way, the film offers a good ride, but it also makes you wonder about the fate of the Western. The classic, airy rhythm has gone forever, I guess, leaving us with a straight choice: either a movie like "Unforgiven," which addresses the frontier myths with more self-conscious solemnity than they were supposed to bear, or a movie like "The Quick and the Dead," which has precious little respect for any tradition at all. I just hope it doesn't come to a showdown. ♦

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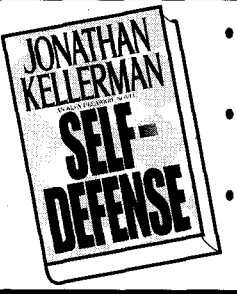

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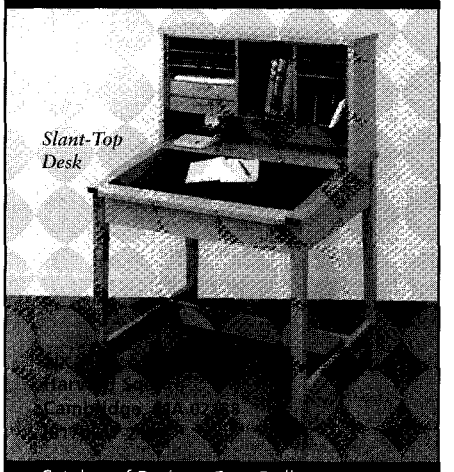
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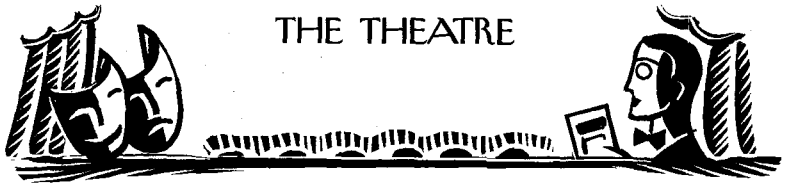


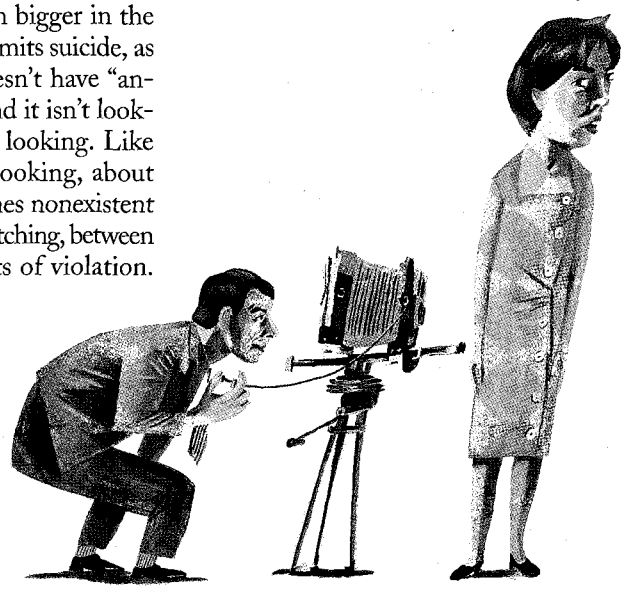
DARKROOM LIGHT

"Silence, Cunning, Exile" zeroes in on Diane Arbus.

BY NANCY FRANKLIN

ONE of the dangers of creating a work of art based on an artist's life is falling into the trap of explanation by pursuing the misleading but tempting trail of cause and effect—a trail invariably sprinkled with well-lit signs pointing straight to an unhappy childhood. Stuart Greenman's play "Silence, Cunning, Exile," which is now at the Public and which, according to a program note, "was inspired by events in the life of Diane Arbus," amazingly manages to avoid this pitfall. (The pitfall is even bigger in the case of someone who commits suicide, as Arbus did.) The play doesn't have "answers" about art or life, and it isn't looking for answers—it's just looking. Like Arbus's work, it's *about* looking, about locating the fine, sometimes nonexistent line between seeing and watching, between acts of sympathy and acts of violation.

From the opening moments of the play, the audience is continually forced to find its place on the spectrum of voyeurism. We see a woman alternately illuminated by the blinding light of a photographer's strobe and disappearing into blackness, and just as we register that we are witnessing a suicide we also register how effective the tableau is—the flashing light, the white bathtub, the afterimage of the woman's shape on our retinas, the quick glimpse of bloody wrists. (At the end of the play, a clever surprise makes manifest the spectators' complicity in what they have just been watching.) Within seconds, the spectacle is over, and we jump back from 1971 to a summer day in the early nineteen-fifties. Suzie (that's the name Greenman has given her, but if you've read Patricia Bosworth's biography of Arbus, and seen how very closely the details of the fiction match the facts, you'll be forgiven for thinking of her as "the Diane Arbus character") and her husband, Donald, are vacationing at a beachside cottage with another couple, Frank and Beryl. All four of them are self-conscious, arty New Yorkers, but Suzie (played by Elizabeth Marvel, who excels at both coltishness and drop-dead cool) is the one most given over to self-observation. Sitting on the sand, nestled against her husband (Denis O'Hare), she wonders out loud, "Do you ever, when you're doing things, do you ever ask yourself about if it's normal? Do you ever want somebody to say, Oh, sure, what you just thought, that's how people are, you belong to the Normal Club?" Suzie's motives are always ambiguous. After Frank almost drowns, she hovers over him, saying, "Was it terrible? Tell me," and what is truly terrible is the note of detachment under the urgency and concern. As John Lahr noted in his review of the American Repertory Theatre's production of the play (in the issue of April 26, 1993), it is in such mo-


From the life: Denis O'Hare and Elizabeth Marvel.

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ments that Greenman creates a "quiet but palpable sense of the monstrous." In one particularly horrific scene, we are made the victims of Suzie's monstrousness. We see her standing in her loft, cowering in fear as someone outside scratches and then pounds at the door. The fear builds unbearably until finally Suzie's friend Kiki (Adina Porter) bursts in, and the two of them collapse in laughter. They're playing a game, and the joke's on us for being terrified on Suzie's behalf. The feeling of betrayal is as real as it is when someone we thought we could trust lies and says, "Don't worry—there's no film in the camera."

Without ever stooping to camp, all the elements of this production, under the direction of Mark Wing-Davey, work together to create an atmosphere charged with self-consciousness: the jittery space-age geometrics of the fifties clothes and furniture, spliced-together bits from hysterically upbeat pop singles of the early sixties, a nearly abstract black-and-white photograph of green beans projected behind Suzie and Beryl as they sit in the sun snapping real green beans. Suzie and Donald, we learn, met as teenagers and grew up together (as did Diane and Allan Arbus); Elizabeth Marvel and Denis O'Hare portray their closeness as a peculiar, twinlike symbiosis. Margaret Whitton is sharp as the alcoholic Beryl, who becomes unhinged in the course of the play. At least one character here seems off: Beryl's husband, Frank, a magazine editor, is, in Tim Hopper's performance, all buffoonish bluster about art and friendship, and not the kind of fellow to be long tolerated by these edgy, skittering urban creatures.

The play coheres, but it doesn't try to wrap things up. Late in the game, Suzie, her voice now flat and distant, talks to Frank about her work and what drives it: "Sometimes it's like an appointment book, and it's so full. I didn't make the appointments, but I have them, I have to keep them." "Silence, Cunning, Exile," while acknowledging our wish to understand why Diane Arbus was drawn to her disturbing subjects and why she killed herself, respects the mystery of art, the inarticulateness at the core of it. The play rigorously refuses to reduce life and a life's work to psychobiography. We can explain where children come from, but, as Greenman knows, where adults come from is anybody's guess. ♦

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BEST SELLERS

BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

March 3, 1996

Best Sellers

This week	Fiction	Last Week	Weeks On List
1	**Wank and File,** by Tom Clancy. President Jack Ryan prevents World War III after a homosexual U.S. Army colonel slaps a North Korean dictator.	2	47
2	**Prophylaxes,** by Anne Rice. Lestat reacts badly at his regular six-month checkup when Dr. Cohen tells him that his incisors will need new crowns.	1	31
3	**The Krupskaya Conundrum,** by Robert Ludlum. A beautiful woman claiming to be Lenin's granddaughter becomes President of Russia, and causes a crisis of manhood in the armed forces.	3	5
4	**Bimbo,** by Danielle Steel. A beautiful woman who starts out in the mail room of a corrupt, powerful businessman becomes his wife and sets out to get her former supervisor fired.		1
5	**Prostate,** by Michael Crichton. A surgeon finds himself on the other end of the scalpel after he discovers that the gland he has just removed from a powerful Japanese businessman has the formula for Coca-Cola tattooed on it.	5	8
6	**Like Mama Thed,** by Winston Groom. America's favorite literary idiot discovers that someone has put a razor blade in one of his chocolates.	6	50
7	**Sump,** by Stephen King. A plumber in a small town in Maine accidentally unleashes hideous forces from the beyond.	9	8
8	* **Baggage Carousel Six,** by Stephen Coonts. Militant Islamic terrorists threaten to blow up a Pan Continental Airlines jumbo jetliner unless documentaries on Ayatollah Khomeini are shown on the in-flight entertainment program.	4	14
9	**Money Isn't Everything,** by Sidney Sheldon. The young widow of a corrupt, powerful businessman must cope with dozens of muscular Mediterranean-style suitors with copious chest hair.	7	11
10	**Dark Duchess,** by Antoinette de Falalo. An eighteenth-century English adventurer causes scandal at his ancestral home, Wheaters, when he brings home a beautiful but dusky new wife named De Caf, from the West Indies.	12	16
11	**Money Can Buy,** by Robert Maller Torringford. Defense Attorney Phil (Gut) Cartwright must decide between his integrity and extreme wealth when a rich client reveals that he did in fact kill his wife, children, hamster and sixteen carollers on Christmas Eve.	8	9
12	**Smoola Smelled of Smelt,** by Peter Hoeg. An odd Danish woman has a nervous breakdown while trying to figure out who put rock salt in her galoshes.	11	26

This week	Nonfiction	Last Week	Weeks On List
1	**Bitch, Bitch,** by Kathleen Gingrich. The mother of the Speaker of the House reiterates her son's opinion of Hillary Clinton.	1	12
2	**I Didn't Do It, Goddammit,** by O. J. Simpson, with Lawrence Schiller. More replies to people who have written to the former Heisman Trophy winner expressing disappointment.	5	15
3	**The Copulation Bomb,** by Brent Goffman, Jr. A demographer argues that too much unlawful carnal knowledge is going on, with dire consequences.	2	16
4	* **101 Uses for a Dead Liberal,** by P. J. O'Rourke. A conservative humorist proposes that Michael Kinsley et al. be clubbed to death like baby seals and turned into hermit-crab food, insulation and golf tees.	3	20
5	**Big Black Book,** by Heidi Fleiss. A Hollywood madam lists the names, phone numbers and Social Security numbers of all her famous and non-famous clients. (CD-ROM included.)	4	57
6	**Adoption by FedEx,** by Mia Farrow. Woody Allen's former mate explains the easy way to keep the nursery jumping.	7	8
7	**Toujours Riche,** by Peter Mayle. More stories about eating too much and dealing with contractors in Provence.	6	17
8	**It's Not the Money, or the Honor,** by Jimmy Carter. The former President on his pursuit of the Nobel Peace Prize.	8	12
9	**After We Cut It Off and Kill It, We're Going to Let It Go,** by Colin Powell. The General writes about his life, from his childhood in the South Bronx to his and President Bush's decision to let the Iraqi Army escape from Kuwait so that it could save Saddam Hussein and kill more Kurds.	11	46
10	**Billions and Billions and Billions,** by Carl Sagan. The astronomer explains that he doesn't mean to sound funny when he says this.	13	4
11	**Waiter, There's a Prosthetic Limb in My Soup,** by John Amos James. A collection of bitter philosophical essays by a man with one arm.	12	14
12	**Charles and Diana: The True Inside Story,** by Robert (Peachy) Bunt. A meticulous former grounds-keeper at Highgrove argues that there couldn't have been grass stains on the Prince's pj's.	10	15

Advice, How-to and Miscellaneous

1	**The Chicken-Fried-Steak, Mashed-Potato, and Two-Martini Diet,** by Duncan Christy, M.D. Losing weight while consuming 8,000 calories a day.	1	39
2	**Becoming God,** by Beepah Doolik. Self-deification in a single afternoon.	2	87
3	**Virtual Sex,** by Thomas Rang, Ph.D. Non-sticky self-gratification.	3	4
4	**How to Kill Yourself,** by Tamara Reem. Self-euthanasia using substances found under most household kitchen sinks.	6	7

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